MODERN YOUTH AND MARRIAGE

HENRY NEUMANN

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BY

HENRY NEUMANN, PH.D.

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TO

A. W.

ONE OF THE NAMELESS MANY
WHOSE FIDELITY KEEPS LIFE WHOLESOME

PREFACE

Youth has always been a time of marked change. Either with entire seriousness, or partly from desire to shock, it has always given its elders more or less occasion for alarm. "You know that vase you said was handed down from generation to generation?" "Yes?" "Well, this generation has dropped it."

But if young people to-day are no different in nature from what they were when the oldest of us were boys and girls, the world in which they are growing up is a much changed world. It has let down many a bar. It has brought rich opportunities for good; and it has also supplied new temptations to poorer behaviors. The dragging of old evils into the light will eventually, it is to be hoped, lead to a cleaner and saner society. But meanwhile the sudden flood of new knowledge is bringing its own perils. Of all topics on which young people are eager to display their wisdom, that of sex offers the most generous chance to combine sophistication with huge lumps of naïveté and new superstition.

From these adolescent visitations, many recover—even before they themselves become parents. Others unfortunately do not; and many suffer a highly serious hurt. Old-time differences between the disreputable and the well-bred are no longer so plainly marked and observed as before. Our youth may not all go to extremes in

wiping out those distinctions. Nevertheless they are exposed everywhere to an attractive philosophy of freedom in which sound and unsound views are closely interwoven. Judge Lindsey's books on juvenile sex transgression (whether exaggerated or not in their estimates) are a significant mark of the times. His plea that the way out of the situation is companionate marriage, and the storm aroused over the suggestion, are likewise evidence that we have here a problem of no little importance.

Is it possible to counter the current of looser views without slighting the eminently just demand of youth for freedom? These pages suggest that an educational program with this end in view can and should be worked out. The popular catch-words are, "It's natural," and "Give us freedom." But there is an ethical philosophy which reads more understandingly into the meaning of human relationships than does naturalism or the usual conception of freedom. It is this point of view which these chapters seek to set forth.

That they will carry conviction to everybody is not expected. Every experienced teacher knows that howsoever reasonable any one's philosophy may seem to himself, it does not follow that it will make the same appeal to other minds. Our leadings are never purely intellectual. Differences of temperament, training, and other experience play a great part, and each must work out a philosophy of life for himself. But if complete agreement is impossible, something may be accomplished when the issues at stake are presented with all possible

frankness and fairness. It is in this hope that these pages are published.

Readers familiar with the work of Dr. Felix Adler will recognize the debt to him. Grateful acknowledgment must also be made to the author's wife, to Dr. M. J. Exner of the American Social Hygiene Association, Dr. William S. Keller of the Cincinnati Social Hygiene Society, Moritz Kirchberger, Charles Lawson, and Mr. and Mrs. George E. O'Dell.

H. N.

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MODERN YOUTH AND MARRIAGE

Opinion or social expectation speaks with many voices; and the spirit of the conscientious . . . shows itself in catching the purest of them.

THOMAS HILL GREEN.

MODERN YOUTH AND MARRIAGE

CHAPTER I

THE REVOLT

Those who officiate at marriages get from prospective brides and grooms many odd requests about the ceremony: "Make it snappy" is not unusual; nor is "Cut out the forever stuff." The optimist may accustom himself to the slang. He may console himself with reflecting that, like other departures from old-fashioned formality, this is only a surface manner. He may even smile upon it as a defense against appearing to take too seriously what at heart is really regarded sacredly. But then again, flippancy of manner may be a true index of the disposition within. And still worse, highly polished speech is by no means lacking today to dub all marriage an utter joke or the mere relic of an outmoded past.

Certain it is that respect for the institution is no longer so unquestioned as before. Open revolt

against it is more frequent. As serious as direct attack is indifference, with or without cynicism. "I could understand my children better," a bewildered father remarked, "if they stood up on these questions and defied me. But they won't even exert themselves to do that. They just go ahead as if I didn't exist at all."

To some a significant enough index of the present plight of marriage is the distance the world has traveled from Catholic rigor to modern divorce for incompatibility. From Rome to Reno is already a big jump. But there are those who ask: "Why be bound by any ties of marriage at all? Why any interference whatever by Church or State?"

"GOOD" HOMES NOW ALARMED

The young generation is not all going to the dogs; but the swift passing of old sanctions is tempting not a few in that direction. Hear the testimony of Ben Lindsey. For many years he was judge of the Juvenile Court in Denver. He is a man with an unusual gift of sympathy with young people in general, and of warm personal interest in the individual boy and girl. We first heard of him some twenty years ago because of the remarkable way in which he was helping to redeem young

delinquents by trusting them. The same gift stood him in good stead in dealing with another type of offender, the young person guilty of sex transgression. This type appeared before him in recent years in significantly larger numbers. Such offending is not at all novel. In other years, too, there were men and boys ready to take their pleasure at the expense of girls in utter disregard of any other consideration; and it is by no means new for some girls to give themselves promiscuously, either for money or for the experience. These types we shall probably continue to have with us more or less abundantly, still needing all the resources that parent, teacher, psychologist, physician, social worker, can supply.

But now we are dealing with the problem raised by other kinds of young persons, not the ones who drift into wrong with the assistance of slum poverty, or under the gross moral ignorance content to find pleasure in sheer sense indulgence. Judge Lindsey tells us that his cases were markedly increased by young people from average or rich homes. Pity that it seems to require this invasion into "nice" homes to wake many of us up. But the fact of the invasion is here. Social workers, teachers, everywhere, tell the same story of young persons from "better" homes who say frankly that they see

no harm in intercourse between comrades, bound to each other by their love, but unwilling, in their own terms, to fetter that love by marriage.

How many take this position there is no way of telling precisely. Judge Lindsey thinks that 50 per cent of the high-school pupils in his city is not an extreme estimate. He bases it on the number of cases brought to his office, and on the ones reported to him by these others. Whenever young persons appeared before him, he made a point of asking if they knew of other such instances. Here is where he must surely have been misled. It is very common for a crook or a person charged with any offense whatever to say, "I know a lot of fellows that are just as bad as I am, or worse." So it is that his estimate may be altogether too sweeping. But even if only 25 per cent or 5 per cent or less of our young people were violating the established code, the situation would be serious enough. What makes it worse is that to-day, for every one who actually breaks the code, there are many who either secretly approve or else are sadly confused as to the ethics of such situations.

The permanence of marriage is no longer taken as essential by all the presumably reputable. Judge Lindsey declares that sooner or later society will have to approve the easier unions which it now

condemns. Popular books and plays are putting "advanced" ideas before great multitudes. The fear of child-bearing has been removed. The church no longer speaks with authority. The home has lost its power to command. Small wonder that with all this freedom to go their own gait, many boys and girls go it at a pace so wild.

What keeps Judge Lindsey optimistic? It is because he thinks that in spite of this marked increase in illicit relations, young people are not simply giving themselves over to an orgy of blind impulse. They are feeling their way, he believes, toward what they deem a more sane and rational affair than permanent marriage. It is his conviction that most of those with whom he has dealt really love each other, want to be faithful, and shun the idea of flitting lightly to other attachments. They refuse, however, to be "chained" by marriage. Capable of just as much loyalty to one another as ever before, they want it to be, as they say, unforced. Here is the new problem raised by this age of freedom and revolt. How shall we deal with it?

PERSUASION BETTER THAN DRIVING

We shall have to readjust many of our attitudes. To scold the young people is folly. They simply

will not listen. They know that the old generation is no longer able to carry out its threats. To weep over them as lost souls is a waste of tears.

If we wish the young to hearken, we must learn that the day is gone when young people respect their parents merely for being older and for being their fathers and mothers. The modern world of adults no longer believes in kingship by divine right. In like manner, youth no longer accepts the divine right of parents. It says, "You wish us to respect you? Make good your claim. Do not put it on the ground that you are older. In this modern world where every day brings some new invention, or sees some ancient theory exploded, age may have decidedly less knowledge than youth." Not that youth is right in treating age thus casually. The latest word is by no means necessarily the most sensible word on life's problems. But whether the young are right or not, it is folly for age to stand pat on the old ground that longer years are inherently entitled to deference.

. . . "So you think you are so much wiser than we, do you? We are just to take your word for things, are we? You must have one line of behavior and we another! You are old and wise while we are young, foolish, and ignorant! All right; show us! Produce the truth if you've got it. Meantime, we go our way."

Thirty, forty years ago, youth couldn't have flung such a challenge with the least hope of success. To-day, the day of the automobile, the telephone, speed, good wages, and an unheard of degree of economic independence for everybody, it can.[1]

Wince as we may at any such attitude, we must reckon with it. We can no longer command. Instead we must persuade, doing our utmost to make the good life attractive. Scolding gets us nowhere. A fine art to be cultivated is that of making the better way appeal on its own merits as the better. This will be done only where parents and teachers learn to reserve their thunders for the rarest, if any, occasions, share the enthusiasms of the young, and try to keep hearty and growing the children's confidence and affection. Too many youngsters come to applaud the remark of a western columnist: "We know people who are so disagreeably good that every time we see them, we feel like giving three cheers for sin."

MARRIAGE CODES HAVE CHANGED

Nothing seems to the young to justify more their demand for freedom, than the mess which so many adults make of marriage. Why is divorce growing at so rapid a rate? The figures published by the

[1] Ben B. Lindsey, *Revolt of Modern Youth* (Boni and Liveright, 1925), p. 33.

United States Census Bureau for 1924 put the scale at ten divorces for every sixty-nine marriages. In some states, it is as high as one to four. And this says nothing of people who would gladly obtain release if they could, but who cannot meet the expense or are unwilling to stand the publicity.

That divorce has increased does not necessarily mean, of course, that marital maladjustment has also grown. It is quite possible that the ill matched couples are no more numerous than they ever were. The many more divorces may now be demanded because, for example, a woman no longer need bear children and be dependent on her husband. This greater freedom for women has many advantages. Nevertheless, whatever the reasons for sundering marriage, it remains true that every such break registers a failure.

Whether the defeats are heralded in this fashion or concealed, we cannot hide these facts from the young to-day. If they do not read about them in the newspapers, all too many have the ugly reality thrust under their eyes right in their own homes. There are parents who have not learned to keep their disagreements hidden from the children. The youngsters hear father talk to his wife in tones he would not use to anybody outside the house. And even where the parents treat one another with cour-

tesy in the presence of the children, the latter learn soon enough that father and mother are estranged at heart. It is a sad day when a child first notices this rift; still sadder when the child says: "I am not going to be tied all my life to a partner from whom I want to get away."

When the young rebel pleads for freedom, remember what adults have done to discredit marriage.

Moreover, an age which makes a god of progress would hardly seem entitled to say that marriage be exempt from the changes affecting so many other institutions. Society's attitude toward marriage has already altered. The Protestant Reformation did its part by undermining the tradition of Roman Catholic authority. Even children of Catholic families may now be found resorting to the courts for the divorce which their ancestors would not have dreamed of asking. The grounds for divorce have been broadened. The statutory cause is no longer confined to adultery. It includes desertion, brutality—of many degrees of mildness—and incompatibility.

COMPANIONATE UNIONS

Hence the plea, first to recognize, and then to sanction, the existence of "companionate mar-

riage." This disturbing term has many meanings. To some it suggests partnership without any sanction of law and with unlimited freedom to change. It is perhaps this meaning which keeps people from seeing how the term is understood by serious students. Professor M. M. Knight, for example, calls our attention to the fact that we still talk of marriage as if there were no unions without the expectation of offspring. This family marriage is still typical of the majority and will surely long continue to be so. But more and more another type of union has come into being. It is the mating of men and women who do not expect to become parents, who do not think of their marriage in terms of obligation to the children, and who demand therefore a greater freedom to divorce and to remarry than society may concede to parents.

Though there was a time when marriage for any other purpose but procreation was branded as mere wantonness, such unions are now much more common, especially since women in far greater numbers than before are self-supporting. They need neither snatch at the first chance to marry nor remain bound to husbands they dislike. The advocates of companionate marriage, like Professor Knight and Judge Lindsey, simply want the existing situation to be recognized and accepted. To per-

mit the childless couple to be divorced by the consent of both is more honest than the present actuality in many states, where, for example, to obtain separation either party must be willing to accept a false charge of adultery or other statutory offense.

The plea is also advanced that the rigid marriage law does not in practice guarantee fidelity, and that all in all, it is far better for the law to accept the open companionate unions than to have people enter the illicit ones.

Hence the new problem. There would seem to be no longer any supreme responsibility to hold the two people together. Certainly no obligation is plainer to the average person than the bond of joint responsibility toward offspring. In earlier days people could not get away from the fact that they had ancestors and posterity both to consider. It was deemed a calamity to let the family die out. There had to be legitimate heirs, and large families were the rule. Now families are growing smaller, or nonexistent.

A generation has arisen, therefore, which is saying, "If there are no children to whom the man and wife are obligated, why should not people be free to unite and to separate as they please?" This question cannot be evaded. It is good that the

young want to build their relationships on something better than the morality of mere custom and convention. People may decide to remain married only because the neighbors will talk if they separate. Or they may want to stay together for some good and solid reason which has nothing whatever to do with the neighbors' opinion. There is a vast difference between the so-called morality which simply keeps up appearances and the kind which acts out of one's own clear-sighted convictions. Now what the young rebel is doing is to turn with scorn from the morality of mere appearance, or unthinking acceptance of custom, and insist that the case for permanent marriage, if there be one, rest on reasons which his best understanding can accept.

REVOLT DOES NOT MEAN WICKEDNESS

Such an attitude undoubtedly is very disturbing. It has always been. But this is also the way by which progress usually enters. Slavery, the subjection of women, war, inhuman exploitation, may be the custom sanctioned by centuries of tradition. Then along comes the spirit of criticism which demands, "Let the custom be as hoary as you please. On what better ground can it justify itself to our reason? Is there none? Then away with it!"

An attitude like this means thinking for one's self and without fear. In the long run, no attitude is more to be encouraged. We surely must wish our young people to be ruled by something better than their neighbors' opinions. To develop a sturdy moral fiber, they can scarcely take as their first commandment the fear of people next door.

In so far, then, as the revolt of modern youth is inspired by this desire to be self-reliant, it should receive hearty approval. Of course, our young people will make mistakes. They do not pretend that they know everything. What they are asking is the right at least not to repeat the mistakes of their parents, but to make their follies and errors, if such must be, their own follies and errors. Their plea is: "You say that you love us and that you are anxious only for our good. Very well. At least love us enough to let us alone. We will try out for ourselves the way of life that looks good to us."

Merely because youth refuses to accept our conventions, or even our ideals, is no reason to suppose it must necessarily be headed toward ruin. On the contrary, it may very well be that the revolt of youth is precisely what we need to make us see where we ourselves may perhaps be wrong. And if what the young say is foolishness, better that

they come out with their folly into the open than whisper it where it cannot be answered by truth.

TO-DAY'S PERPLEXITIES

The more serious among those who question the traditional teachings, we must not forget, are genuinely troubled. Often, even in the seeming self-assurance of youth, there lurks the sentiment expressed by the poet:

Thou Ship of Earth, with Death, and Birth, and Life, and Sex aboard,
And fires of Desires burning hotly in the hold,
I fear thee, O! I fear thee, for I fear the tongue and sword
At battle on the deck, and the wild mutineers are bold!
. . . . . .
A pilot, GOD, a pilot! for the helm is left awry.[2]

Facing life with the best intentions, but in a world as complex as to-day's, our young people soon find themselves much confused. They discover that the seeming decencies of civilization cloak many an iniquity. Because the plea of self-restraint has been misused to support unholy vested interests, the claims of self-expression are being urged with all the exaggerations usually ad-

[2] "Street Cries: The Ship of Earth," *The Poems of Sidney Lanier* (Charles Scribner's Sons).

vanced by crusaders; and there is no gospel which the just craving of the young for self-direction finds more congenial. To complicate the problem, there are the economic difficulties. Though the high-school pupil can begin to earn wages fabulous to parental eyes, the cost of establishing a suitable home in the modern city is high. Never, probably, was there a time when such powerful forces were at work to whip up the appetite for luxuries. Modern business does everything to stimulate the desire for many more things than the simpler living of the past found satisfying. People still want children of their own; but how shall they manage their lives through the arduous years before income is enough to support a family properly?

Before these urgencies, many a young man and woman stand to-day in pathetic bewilderment. Ere we attribute to fault or vice their refusal to view marriage as their parents did, let us remember how markedly and how swiftly life has changed and, no less, that youth is as ready as ever before to do whatever right it can be persuaded to follow sincerely.

Mighty currents are moving to-day in the direction of personal and social disintegration. But the case for the stricter ideals of sex is far from

hopeless. It can be put on much stronger ground than the fact that they are time honored or that departure will set the neighbors talking. It can stand in despite of the undoubted failures which many marriages are. Perhaps we shall see that back of the conventional respect for marriage, there are ethical considerations which even in our age of freedom and disillusion, good sense will still deem valid.

CHAPTER II

WHY MONOGAMY?

Assuredly so intimate an affair as marriage is in one sense nobody's business but that of the two people themselves, especially where there are no children. There are fields of conduct where outside interference is more than ordinarily objectionable. But even those who would not have the law step in to forbid easy divorce and remarriage nevertheless see in companionate unions something more than a strictly private affair. For one thing, they have their eyes fixed upon the permanent fidelity essential to the family marriage; and they ask: "Will not the greater freedom of the childless weaken the institution as a whole? Are not the companionates obligated to strengthen the institution for the sake of those who are parents and for the sake of the children?" We do not live alone, but in a world where other people are strengthened by our strength and weakened by our taking responsibilities lightly. No training has meant more for the spiritual progress of the race than the fidelity required by marriage. Even the

childless have some part to play in supporting and enriching the tradition of faithfulness.

SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGES

The thought will be clearer if we first recall just what marriage may be made to mean at its best—its contribution to man's higher life. The actual reasons for marrying are of many kinds—romantic love, or physical passion, or the desire for money; or the reasons may be all sorts of mixtures. But the best hope for any marriage is in the fact that most people are willing to venture upon it because they see a certain excellence in the partner-to-be. Each beholds or senses in the other something which invites trust. Though life is full of uncertainties, and many marriages fail deplorably, people still continue to take the risk because their prospective mates appeal to them as deserving of the needed confidence. Few incentives to excellent living are more powerful than this trust and the desire of honorable men and women to be worthy of it.

Disillusion, of course, enters in time. There are no full-grown perfect beings. Sooner or later the frailties are recognized. But there is in most people a better self which the fallible self hides; and the greatest privilege of the married life is to

be the one who assists the other more and more to do justice to that better possibility.

For encouraging the excellence in people there is little to surpass this creative expectation. With Rosalind's eye upon him, Orlando could have defeated two wrestlers like Charles. Macbeth wants the crown but cannot bring himself to "catch the nearest way." Thereupon, it is the one who knows him best who becomes the spur to his wavering will. To be asked: "Would'st live a coward in thine own esteem?" might leave him unmoved were it not that the goad is applied by his wife. Her spirit nerves him to the deed; and much of the pity with which the play touches us is occasioned by thinking of what all this energizing gift in the wife might have released in him for deeds of a better kind. The liberating and encouraging power works in the other direction as well. The husband does for the wife what she does for him.

Both persons will be the more likely to mean this to each other when they are engaged in a task which takes them out of themselves; and the more important the joint enterprise, the better. It may be some social reform to which both are devoted. It may be an absorbing pursuit like the chemical researches in which Pierre and Marie Curie were united. For most people the supremely worth-

while task takes form in caring for their children. Working together properly in an enterprise of high consequence keeps the minds of the partners healthy, obliges them to see big things big and little things small, and enables them to behold, each in the other, the qualities of first importance for all excellent living.

It is the special gift of the artist, the musician, the poet, to draw aside the veil from things familiar and reveal them to us in the light of a new beauty. But this artistry is also the gift of those who are truly wedded. They, too, become revealers and interpreters of the wonder of life. Each, by being the kind of person he or she is, assists the other to see how splendidly life may be lived, with what truth and noble beauty and unselfish fidelity. Dante says that it was through Beatrice he was enabled to look into "the heaven which is pure light, light intellectual, full of love, light of true good, full of joy, joy transcending every sweetness." And these glimpses into the perfect life are made possible for the wife, too, through the ministry of her partner.

RESPONSIBILITY TO SUCCESSORS

"This is an ideal picture," it will be said. No doubt. Not every girl is a Beatrice. The two-

room apartment in the modern city is very unlike the "home" of earlier times. The man and the woman leaving each morning for separate jobs, neither of which interests the other in the least, are different from the partners whose children give them a very serious joint responsibility.

The ideal picture, however, has its uses. The trend of the times may be in an altogether different direction. But this hardly makes it the wisest direction. If we are not to abandon all attempt to shape the unions of men and women on what would seem the better lines, we dare not forget what marriage can be made to mean at its best. "Ideal," therefore, as the sketch may be, it is needed. When children come, nothing measures so well the good fortune of such offspring as the degree to which some such very ideal is honored. Children require the utmost that all the world can offer them and may rightly demand it first from the two persons who normally love them most. The work of the world is to be carried on after we of the present day have departed, by the boys and girls whom we have called into life. They are our successors. The work is to be done by them better than we have done it. Therefore, they need all the best we can give them.

Health, of course, is essential. Still more neces-

sary, however, are the moral traits which in some circles it is fashionable just now to belittle. For example, in "Man and Superman," when the family are horrified at the thought that the unmarried young lady is to become a mother, John Tanner remarks: "She is going to do the state a service." This is a typical way of ignoring fundamental distinctions in order to be witty. If human beings were only creatures of flesh and blood like cattle, then the greater the number of stock farms to breed them, the greater the service. But aptitude for epigram need not obscure the difference between a barn and a home, a distinction of paramount importance just as long as human souls are candidates for the excellences that make us not animal but human. Among these are better minds, finer and deeper spiritual perceptions, qualities of brain and soul, best nurtured not on stock farms but in homes where father and mother live together permanently, where both the parents, for all their failures, keep on trying to unite their best for the sake of the unlike and still better best in their offspring. It is no service to mankind merely to add another child to the race. The benefit depends upon the kind of child; and this in turn depends upon the home in which it is bred.

Beyond question, many homes to-day are far

inferior to model orphan asylums and nursery schools. There are parents woefully ignorant of the most elementary facts of hygiene. There are "nervous" mothers who give their children's behaviors a false twist from the start; there are fathers whose conduct is anything but exemplary. But it is better to educate the unwise parent than to dissolve the home. It matters not how scientifically managed a public institution may be. There is something about a true home which one seeks in vain in the public substitutes. To make possible the finest of such personal care for those who are to be our successors calls for every help from everybody, married or not.

The child's own parents are the ones to give him the intensive nurture needed. The child requires all the love, all the best wisdom, of its mother. But it needs equally all the love and all the best wisdom of the father, too.[1] The father has his gifts—different from the mother's. The child should get the interplay of both. The first-rate home is one where the double gifts are poured out most freely and most wisely.

In order that there may be this kind of upbringing, parents must aim at keeping their union

[1] See *Intelligent Parenthood* (University of Chicago Press, 1926), chapter by author, "Father's Responsibility."

permanent. In practice they may fail, and so lamentably that it may be better all round for them to separate. But where the failures are not so gross, the object to try for is to keep the union unbroken. Each partner should have intimate knowledge of the children; and equally for the children's sake, each requires all the intimate and growing knowledge of the other parent which can be learned. To this end they need all the support which the society about them can render, the help even of the childless also.

WHEN DUTY AND INCLINATION CLASH

Accepting marital obligations in the right spirit has given the human race a priceless training which to-day and to-morrow will still require. If marriage had nothing else to its credit in the record of man's progress, this one fact alone would stand out as inestimably important. It has, in the first place, done more than any other institution to promote the exercising, and thereby the developing, of regard for others. "How can one love but what one yearns to help?" Consideration for other people and active desire to further their welfare are none too plentiful yet. But parental affection is one of the commonest and most natural expressions of such feeling. For many people it is the

only impulse which lifts them at all out of themselves. For others, the fondness they feel for their own boys and girls makes possible a greater consideration for the parents of other children. In view of the immense work which an enlightened regard for others must still perform in the world, it is fortunate that this native material for such extension is so abundantly at hand.

In the second place, marriage has afforded mankind a precious development in responsibility. We need not shut our eyes to the harm done by preaching a sheeplike submissiveness. There are no ideals which have never been perverted—witness liberty, or love of country. But when all allowance has been made for the hurt inflicted by misusing ideals of duty, it remains true that our world, for all its defects, is a better place than it would otherwise be because parents have trained themselves to be responsible, pledge-keeping people. The spiritual fiber of mankind is stronger at this moment for every act of faithfulness to their task which fathers and mothers have performed

The reason is simple. Few temptations are more numerous and insistent than the urge to run away from our commitments as soon as the consequences irritate. A young woman volunteers to become a nurse. Her purposes, like those in all of us, are

mixed. She wants to be of use, and, at the same time, she likes the romantic side of her calling. She is proud of her nurse's cap and apron, proud of the respect in which she is held for choosing this career. Then her work in the hospital grows tedious. Perhaps an epidemic breaks out; nurses are none too numerous; and she is overworked. There are, nevertheless, better leadings than to say: "I chose to become a nurse, but I did not choose all these irksome consequences. I shall drop the whole business for something I like better." Though, to be sure, a work done whole-heartedly is always more likely to be done better than otherwise, yet many a time there is a kind of second wind which comes from trying to see a job through.

Here is a fact about human relationships which is easily overlooked by the very people who call themselves realists. Duty, one would almost imagine from listening to the rebellious, is the arbitrary creation of people who hate to see others happy. All the joy that life can rightly bring is never too much. Many a problem would go if joy and responsibility always went hand in hand. Fortunate the lives where the two journey all the way together! But where the roads diverge? Future generations, it is possible, may develop strong personal fiber in ways of which we now

know little or nothing. The business of living may be spared many a hardship we are now inclined to regard as always sure to be. But we cannot be any too sure that it will; and meanwhile we may well fear for a generation unused to endure difficulty for the sake of loyalty to a task. It will be a pitifully flabby world where responsibility is put anywhere but first.

We need not forget how important is the part played by sentiment. No marriage should be begun without love. But the sentiment which brings the two people together cannot be the basis on which to rest the permanence or the impermanence of the union. Sentiment is undependable, tricksy, shifting. The woman loses her physical charm with the years. The husband becomes dull as the wife grows used to the traits which at first so attracted her. If attraction is the only bond, and if feeling is the only ground for conduct, it is entirely fitting that the change should come whenever sentiment withers, and as often.

But suppose people enter into marriage with the idea that though love has brought them together, nevertheless, once the union is formed, a new situation develops—a situation which brings its own unescapable responsibilities? Then the question is no longer simply how one feels. It becomes

the vastly more pertinent question of what is right. Once the union is entered, there are obligations (to be considered presently) to the other partner; there are responsibilities to the children and to the world in which parents and children are to carry on together.

RESPONSIBILITY AND PERSONAL FIBER

It is argued that people will treat one another better when they know that their partners are free at any time to leave them. There is no doubt that many a brutality, severe or mild, would thus receive a wholesome check. Tyrannies over those who cannot escape are frequent enough in marriage as elsewhere. But it may well be questioned whether freedom to walk out at will does not also carry its own special encouragement to wrong attitudes.

It is entirely possible, for example, that as long as men and women are left free to rove in fancy over new choices, they may be less inclined to make the best of the one to which they are already committed. Why should a man take the trouble to try to understand any further the person whom he is free to leave? Why make the effort to know and to prize the better self in her in spite of the traits which so annoy? There is a kind of intensive

cultivation required for the best relating of men and women to each other. The mind which harbors the thought that at any time one may flit to another partnership is much less likely to study and to prize the best there is in the partner already his own.

Nor is such a person likely to turn back upon himself and ask wherein he himself is accountable for the failure of his union. It is a very common frailty to keep our self-esteem by putting the blame for our failures upon other people. Few of us like to be told in specific terms that we can make a better job of ourselves than we have done. "Who am I that I should improve upon a masterpiece?" Nothing so encourages this weakness in married people as the thought of being free to turn to somebody else. "This husband, or this wife of mine, does not appreciate me. But here is a person who knows how lovable I am, how brainy, how artistic." Far better would it be to search one's self honestly and learn where one has made it so much harder for the partner to see the better man in him and to encourage him. So doing he may understand more truly what is genuinely better in himself and make it easier for the partner to behold it. Not least, the process may make it less difficult for the man to understand, to respect, and

to cherish the better woman in his wife. If being bound encourages tyranny, being free encourages its own ills too.

Ample witness to the upbuilding power of the better attitude is borne by all the age-long hosts of mothers. Caring for their children, putting up with many a hardship at the hands of the fathers, rejecting possibly more than one suggestion to revolt, have called out in the mothers of the race qualities which make the name mother in every language holy. Not even the gross failures which any one of us can mention offhand can outweigh the immense contribution to better life which by and large has come from the devotion now summed up in the one word motherhood.

Nor may we forget what care for wife and child has done to civilize the fathers. It is a poor sort of male who does not experience at least a minimum of refining influence from the need to look after the woman carrying the child, to protect her against his own uncivilized impulses, to shield her and the little one against needless hardship, to curb, if only for a time, his desires to go off on his own satisfactions, and more positively, to spend himself for the sake of his family. Many a man is stimulated to practice for his family a self-discipline, a devotion and fidelity which would

otherwise be less likely. The child is in a very real sense the savior of his parents. Gifts of highest value to the race have been called into exercise by the needs of the family.

What the radicals forget is this transforming power which the care of a family exerts upon father and mother both. If they remembered what fatherhood does to make better men of the fathers, they would be less ready to demand, as some do, the right to motherhood, if so desired, without marriage. Why deprive the children of the gifts the father can bring? Why cheat the father of the opportunity to raise his own spiritual stature by putting the gifts into practice?

In short, there is a more searching test of the value of an institution than to ask whether individuals are kept happy under it. Men and women have a work to do which undoubtedly will be done better when needless unhappiness is prevented. But where happiness is not always possible, the more fundamental test must be applied: What manner of being is more likely to be cultivated by holding responsibilities sacredly or lightly?

It is for these reasons that the solemnizing of marriages by Church or State is intended to be more than a perfunctory ceremony. Church or State, or

both, stand back of the marriage to remind the two people that their union is no longer their own exclusive affair. There come occasions enough where one wants to treat pledges as mere scraps of paper; and at such possible breaking points, it is well to have the solemnity of one's vow brought home. Some persons no more need such support than they require the Penal Code to keep them from stealing or killing. Others break the code in spite of the law. But in between these two groups are those more numerous folk (and from time to time their numbers may be increased from the other two groups) whose fundamental readiness to do right may be strengthened by the thought of a vow which Church or community, or both, expect them to take seriously.

Here is where Mr. Lindsey's warm heart toward the young transgressors has obscured his judgment. His treatment of the unmarried young mother is worlds better than casting her out or sending her to the abortionist. But he seems to suppose that the opposition to his companionate prescription springs from sheer inertia or from suppressed and distorted sex longings on the part of the opponents.

He forgets that the plea for the looser unions touches a very sensitive nerve in every healthy-minded community; for such pleading is trying to

build up a so-called new ethics out of people's weakness. It offends because it looks ultimately in the direction of sanctioning indulgence rather than promoting control. When an epidemic of influenza is spreading, other counsels are possible than: "Give up the attempt to promote health." For the boys and girls who have already gone wrong, it may well be that the only immediate step is to bring them together in a companionate marriage which, for the time being, may at least keep their indulgence within this limit. Companionate union is to be preferred to unrestricted gratifications—if there is no other alternative. But the "if" reminds us of the more pertinent question: "Is there no other way open? Is there not a still better aim toward which our efforts should work?" In meeting the immediate needs of the young people who reach the Juvenile Court, or of older persons who likewise transgress, we may be misled into forgetting the best aim toward which the sanctions and the teachings of society should be pointed. The tradition of responsibility needs all the support which everybody can give it.

THE LOYALTY OF THE CHILDLESS

Successful marriages, which, it would seem, fortunately outnumber the other kind, will be

treated in Chapter VI. It would be a mistake to suppose from the foregoing pages that marriage is a crown of thorns. There is little, if any, problem of fidelity where the union is happy. As we shall see in the next chapter, the marriages which fail are the ones that draw attention, not the many more that prosper.

The problem is raised only when the relations are strained; and it is for this reason, not in the least because marriage is mainly a sorrow, that the unhappy relation has been discussed here. The point is that marriage should be considered in the light of what it does to call out the finer potentialities in the partners and in the children. Duty to the offspring is recognized even in those lands in Europe where divorce is most free. And for the childless, the suggestion that such persons be free to enter as they will into as many unions as they choose, leaves out of sight the fact that they too have obligations toward the children. The stricter ideal is needed for the sake of the immensely important contribution which the family marriage offers to the spiritual life—an offering helped or hindered by what all of us do to support or to weaken the will to be responsible.

Nor should we overlook the obligation which the two childless people owe to each other. Even

where no children are born, a new situation is established by the mating. There are, for instance, effects upon the woman which the literature of rebellion quite overlooks. A decent woman does not desire the mating in and of itself. Unlike the harlot, she wants to be wooed honestly by one who loves her. She wants the mating to be an incident to loving and being loved. The caresses are precious to her because they are the marks of affection. She wishes to be something other than the mere instrument of a man's pleasure. The consequence of the mating is that she is likely to love the man still more, as the prostitute does not.

Here is where the new situation is created—in the attachment which the woman feels for the man and which she is apt to feel more thoroughly than he does. Once these chords of personality in her have been played upon, she cannot go, without a certain loss of self-respect, to the arms of another man. The harlot does go, but not the woman whose mating requires love. And now if the understanding is that each is to be free at will to leave in quest of new adventure, there is something not altogether admirable in the person who can take such a step.

The intimacy of the experience—a relationship all too easily cheapened and vulgarized—pro-

duces its own effects for better or for worse upon the finer fibers that make us human. There are some experiences we can go through lightly; for they leave us little different from what we were before. Others we cannot have in quite the same way, because the deepest intimacies have been concerned. Generally, the woman is more profoundly affected and more likely to be hurt by the breaking of the tie thus entered upon and by the passing to another. As a novelist of our day makes one of his women characters say: "A man takes marriage easily. If it doesn't fit, why he hangs it up in the closet, so to speak, and takes it out just as little as he has to. But a woman must wear it pretty much all the time—or give it up altogether." In terms of sheer suffering, men pay little of the penalty endured by the woman who gives her all when she gives her person and then must see the man go off —according to the agreement—to some other woman. Shall she herself then turn to another man? Not without more hurt than the chivalry of an honorable man would want to prevent.

Pleading for "open temporary sex partnership," Mrs. Bertrand Russell argues that "such companionship, not despised and concealed, would work great changes in the character of individuals.

There would be fewer lonely, hard and envious men and women, less anger and jealousy, more generosity and love—the one kind that is really worth having, love based on understanding." [2] This is incredibly naïve. How deep is the understanding encouraged by promiscuity? Suffering is to be diminished by the simple process of ruling out moral obligation. Will it be lessened when the woman loses her "beauty and delight" and her partner is therefore free to take a younger mate? Will loneliness, envy, anger, jealousy, disappear when she sees him go? To such a person the advocate of free love would offer the recommendation: "Be a good sport." But even this quasi-moral injunction would seem to imply that we need more fundamental principles for human relationship than "the right to be happy."

Nor is the root consideration merely the suffering to the woman. There is a kind of reverence for the human soul whereby the easy passing to new intimacies is forbidden. Fine-grained natures neither permit nor inflict such cheapening of the self. Those who do not already feel of their own accord what is meant by reverence for the higher nature, or the worth in people, will miss the point

[2] Mrs. Bertrand Russell, *The Right to Be Happy* (Harper and Brothers, 1927), p. 154.

of the disapproval felt for a light way of taking even the childless marriage.

Everything depends upon the world of values which a person makes his own. There are situations where good reasons for the better course can be offered plentifully but to little avail. Some people, for instance, tear pages out of telephone books in public booths. Say to them: "You are doing wrong"; and their answer is: "What do I care?" So with regard to other matters, whether the self-seeking is as gross as this or more subtle. Some people are more ready than others to honor such considerations as respect for the worth in others, to appreciate "mankind's centuries of painful schooling in self-conquest," and to feel what treason to this advance there is in self-gratification. With coercion ruled out, all depends on the scale of values which each accepts for himself freely. One can have the indulgences which the less disciplined or the less thoughtful enjoy; but the price must be paid in the damage to those perceptions which, to the morally sensitive, are of ultimate importance. It is no longer possible to preach self-restraint for its own sake. Self-restraint, however, for the purpose of strengthening and releasing the more distinctively human excellences is surely

another matter. To ethically developed natures, "binding ties are welcome in so far as they are necessary to unbind what is highest in us." [3] The relationship of the childless is not exempt from the general principle that the touch of life upon life should aim to encourage in each what is highest.

Once more the question will be raised: "Is not all of this just as likely to be true of non-legal unions? Are there not such partnerships where each is thoroughly loyal to the other, and where joy, understanding, trust, respect, affection, all the quickening, higher influences, are at work?" Assuredly there have been such unions and still are —more successful than many a legal marriage. But if this is true, what objection can there be to legalizing the unions? The reluctance would appear to suggest that most of such unions are not expected to be permanent. For the reasons already advanced—the needs of the children, the influence of companionate marriages upon the stability of family marriages, the hurtful effects of promiscuity—the expectation of permanence is a capital need.

[3] Felix Adler: *The Reconstruction of the Spiritual Ideal* (D. Appleton and Company, 1924).

BETTER THAN RIGID DIVORCE LAWS

All this might seem to advocate making divorce laws most rigorous. No such thought is intended here. There are legal marriages which are desecrations, begun for reasons far from commendable, and maintained to little else but the hurt of all concerned. Legality may be as sadly misused as freedom. "It is a base-born morality which is begotten of a statute." Law imposes coercions which can touch only the overt acts—and not always even those—rarely the inner propulsions.

At its best it is a very crude instrument, unfitted for the discriminations needed where life's privacies are affected. Law must deal with large uniformities, whereas the problems of human relationship are also unique. In few fields of conduct are cases more poignantly individual than here. Application for divorce, moreover, is a sign that the marriage has already failed. We can be none too sure that enforced continuance will in every instance redeem the union from still further failure. What these pages desire to stress, therefore, is rather the crying need for ethical preparation before marriage and the sound education required, and permanently so, even after.

CHAPTER III

ROMANTIC ILLUSIONS

People's conduct is never shaped directly, entirely, or even chiefly, by the thoughts they think. The practices to which they are committed by habit play probably the most powerful part. The subconscious influence of example, unsuspected fears and hopes, the tug of this or that emotion, must also be considered. But whatever may be the degree to which reflective thinking enters into conduct, its influence is important enough. When a crisis arises, a mistaken or a sound belief built up earlier may be just the force to turn the decision one way or another. Indeed there are crises which need never arise at all and which can be prevented in no slight part by habits of sound judgment.

Two outstanding types of misleading judgment are common to-day. One may be called "the mistakes of romanticism." The other may be termed "the mistakes of realism," under which may be included, among others, the general and

highly attractive fallacy that the ethical teachings of the past are only so much "bunk."

FALSE PICTURES IN PLAYS AND NOVELS

Here we shall consider the former type of fallacy. It is unfortunate that young and old alike receive much of their teaching about marriage from novels and plays; for with all that books do to make vivid and appealing the ways of living, a good deal of such teaching is quite misleading. For example, if one were to judge married life chiefly from these literary portrayals, one might well suppose that most marriages are downright failures, or else that sooner or later in real life some third person must always enter to give the plot its typical triangle formula. It is very easy to forget that the literary artist is selecting only the kind of theme which his particular skill allows him to handle successfully.

Why so? There was a time when novels and plays dealt only with the struggle of the hero to win the heroine. The book ended with their marriage. The only way to keep the interest of the reader was to make the hero struggle against an obstacle of some kind—the indifference of the heroine, the hostility of the villain, or the opposition of the heroine's parents. The thrill of the

story lay in watching how these barriers were overcome.

Styles have changed. It is now much more common to tell the story of what happens after the wedding is consummated. But here, too, it is necessary to introduce struggle and suspense; and no type of struggle is more charged with popular dramatic interest than the passion of husband, wife, or unmarried lover for somebody who cannot be had without conflict. Whether the triangle situation is resolved rightly or wrongly, it is one of the easiest devices by which to supply dramatic interest. To portray successful marriages interestingly is a much more difficult undertaking than to tell about the strained or the unhappy.

The result is that if we trusted chiefly to literature to inform us about marriages, we should imagine that most of them were failures or were in some other way threatened with disruption, and largely because of some third party. As a matter of fact, it is only these types that are forced upon our attention, precisely as the newspapers also single out the unusual and the sensational. The papers do not speak of the thousands of buildings that do not catch fire. It is the one which burns that makes the story. Very few writers have the artistic skill to tell the undramatic happenings

which are apt to be the more numerous. "Wife shoots her husband" makes the usual headline. Who, however, can write the story, "Million wives tempted to shoot their husbands but mend socks instead"? Still greater would be the artistry required to tell how other millions were not even tempted. If to-morrow the easiest divorce laws were to be enacted, it is highly probable that most husbands and wives would not avail themselves of the door to escape, for the reason that all pleas for separation considered, their marriages are on the whole satisfactory. In singling out the dramatic conflicts, the total picture offered in books or plays is, therefore, apt to be misleading.

"All literature," it may be objected, "was once life; and nothing further need matter." But art is selective; and while the truth which the writer chooses to set forth may be faithful enough to life as he has observed and felt it, nevertheless marriage as a whole, or even for most people, may be quite unlike what most of the artists make it. Edgar Allan Poe had a special gift at portraying diseased minds. But the fidelity of his pictures to life within his preferred field need not dim the fact that outside this region there are not a few minds highly different from his portraits. College comics make a specialty of jokes about dumb-

bells, petting parties, athletics, fooling the professor—all very true to life, of course, except that they say nothing about the many less colorful persons who study seriously and act sensibly.

It is romantic folly to suppose that most husbands and wives must expect at some time or other to long to turn to somebody else. Any such view forgets the numerous people who have the wit to understand that once they marry, they put by forever the thought that there can now be any other mate. The wish for somebody else may indeed arise in many minds; but so do all sorts of other absurd desires; and the level-headed administer to such wishes—often quite undramatically—the snub they deserve. It is a pity that the skill of the artist cannot make this truth about most marriages as vivid as he makes the pictures of the other kind. Annul every marriage to-day; and to-morrow most people would probably be quite happy to remarry their present partners.

An outstanding story of the better relationship is Dorothy Canfield's *The Bent Twig*. Readers will recall the delightful pictures of the professor's home, the house that rang with music or echoed to laughter and the talk of happy voices. There were no servants; and father and children shared with the mother in doing the chores. It was a home

where the children saw moral courage, faithful work, high thinking, trust, consideration, love of beauty, carried into the whole day's living, and all in jolly good spirits. Husband and wife never once entertained any thought of estrangement. They were too happily united in bringing up an excellent family. Homes like this are found much more frequently in actual life than they are in fiction. Tales about them are worlds harder to make interesting than the stories where the marriage is either wrecked or threatened with disaster. But this need not conceal the fact that the true marriages are at least as real as those of the other kind.[1]

[1] To supplement and to correct the views of marriage in fiction and drama, why not read biography? Even though, like other literary forms, it has its own great limitations, it can be consulted with advantage. Many husbands have written excellent life histories of their wives. See for example, J. Ramsay MacDonald's *Margaret Ethel MacDonald;* George H. Palmer's *Alice Freeman Palmer.* Wives, too, have offered pictures of their husbands, no less authentic than novels for presenting the more admirable features of the marriage relation: *Pierre Curie,* by Marie Curie; *An American Idyll,* by Cornelia S. Parker; *The Road to the Temple,* by Susan Glaspell; *A Sunny Life,* by Isabel C. Barrows; *Canon Barnett,* by his wife; *Thomas W. Higginson,* by Mary T. Higginson; *My Apprenticeship,* by Beatrice Webb.

The letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning and her husband tell their own story. In Albert Bigelow Paine's four-volume *Mark Twain,* and in the two volumes of letters, there are many beautiful pictures of a relationship well worth noting, in spite of recent psychoanalytic attempts to give the relationship another meaning.

MARRYING TO LIFT A MORTGAGE

Another common and misleading interpretation of life makes it a laudable act for the heroine to marry an unloved man to save the family fortunes. Such unselfishness, to be sure, is not without a certain nobility. But generous as the motive is, it is nevertheless a mistake. The family has no business to purchase its welfare by accepting the degradation of the daughter's spirit; for this is what occurs when she sells herself by marrying the man she does not love.

In real life, of course, this dramatic situation is not highly frequent. More often where people marry for money, the motive is quite selfish. But the essential wrong in marrying the unloved person will be clearer if we consider the situation where the motive is at least more praiseworthy. Whatever regard we may feel for the willingness to make the sacrifice, we should not shut our eyes to the wrong in such a union.

Take for example St. John Ervine's play, "John Ferguson." The father, old and sick, wants his son Andrew to go to college and become a minister; but there is a mortgage on the home to be paid off. The holder of the mortgage is a brute. Hannah, the daughter, is desired in marriage by

Jimmy Caesar, a contemptible creature willing to pay the mortgage if only he may have Hannah. The girl loathes him. Her father has qualms of conscience about accepting aid by this questionable means but leaves it to Hannah to decide. Her first decision is that she will have Caesar. But so intense is her dislike of him that almost immediately she breaks her promise. She is, therefore, obliged to go to the home of the holder of the mortgage, Witherow, and tell him that he may proceed to foreclose. Witherow assaults her. To avenge this injury to the family honor, her brother Andrew shoots the villain.

The family are agreed in regarding it as a deep disgrace that Hannah has been the victim of physical outrage. But suppose she had married the man whom she detested? People recognize physical violence readily enough for the wrong it is. They do not see the lifelong dishonor in a detested marriage. Indeed, if it is honor or dishonor which is in question, the latter dishonor is the worse of the two. In the former instance, the woman is a helpless victim. In the second, the disgrace is accomplished with her own consent.

On this point, the usual teachings shed little light. The sanctity of marriage lies in the spiritual effects of the union upon both the parties and upon

all whom the union touches. In accepting their joint responsibility, the man helps the woman to become the better woman, the wife the husband to become the better man, and each thereby makes himself the better person. Now where this is the ideal, it is plain that the two people must have affection and respect for one another, certainly at the beginning of their union. It takes more than merely the words pronounced by Church or State to consecrate the marriage. They may cloak a lifelong dishonor. The girl may be only the slave of the man's passion. For a woman to marry in order that there may be a money gain is an act in some respects not altogether unlike the giving of herself without wedding. To let one's self become the instrument of another's pleasure for gain is prostitution, even when the act is partially cleansed of its grossness by being called a marriage.

The point of ethics involved here is an utterly false idea of sacrifice. It is wrong to say that it is only a question of Hannah's happiness as against the happiness of her parents. This is a common fallacy. People ask: "What is the happiness of one person as against turning her parents out of their home?" Yes, if there were no other question than the happiness of one over that of the

larger number, the ethics might well be settled on this simple arithmetical basis. But this is not a matter of so much happiness against so much. It is a question of the happiness of the group as opposed to the moral honor or the moral dishonor of a human soul, a vastly unlike thing. Sacrifice your happiness for the sake of some one else's happiness, if you wish. Or sacrifice it for an ideal purpose. But not even for the purpose of letting a brother study for the ministry is it right to consent to a soul's disgrace.

Sympathy for the parents is due to the very natural compassion we feel for their distress at leaving the home. But when the parents in this play are confronted with another choice between leaving home and doing something they regard as worse, they are willing enough to give up the house. When the money to pay the mortgage finally arrives, but John has learned that his son Andrew is the murderer, he presses Andrew to flee to America and offers him the money for this purpose. To save his son's life he is now entirely ready to have the mortgage go unpaid. He realizes at that moment that there may be more important things in life than remaining even in your sick old age in the house where you were born.

HONEYMOONS END

Another point where romantic imaginings need to be corrected by hard sense is the idea that marriage, to be a success, must be an unending honeymoon. Neither in the wedded life nor anywhere else is an unbroken round of radiantly happy hours possible. Look, for instance, at the life of the artist whom it is so easy to imagine the typically joyous person. It is illusion to suppose that his life is just one vivid emotion after another. Any artist will tell us that he has his long, terribly uninteresting stretches. He has a few inspired creative periods, in some men longer sustained than in others; but they are never permanently unbroken. His golden moments are followed by many decidedly gray. His wife can say how fearfully dull he can be in the intervals between the creative periods and how appallingly long these stretches often are.

But the error which people make about the continued vividness of the artist's life is quite the mistake they indulge by supposing that the joy of marriage is going to maintain itself forever on the one intense level. Even in the most successful marriages, there is frequent occasion for adjustments of will to will which are not always easy.

Times come when the freshness and the early glory of the relationship are dimmed by the mere fact of familiarity. The uninterrupted intense joy in marriage is as much a myth as it is in the life of the artist. What happens in the successful marriage is that the high emotion at the beginning supplies a certain illumination; it quickens the vision of the two people; it opens their eyes to the magnificent vistas of the days that an ideal union would afford. "Oh, but it is wonderful," wrote a wife, "to live with some one who thinks you are wonderful! It does not make you conceited, not a bit, but it makes a happy singing feeling in your heart to feel that the one you love best in the world is proud of you. And there is always the incentive of vowing that some day you will justify it all."

The importance of such radiant experiences is that they supply a light by which people can walk in the periods when the skies are overcast. The world is not so arranged that we can expect every day to be a bright one. But the value of the golden days is that they also light up the days which follow; and those who have been brought up to sound ideals about all human relationships learn from these glimpses of light where to keep on walking in the days when the emotions are less keen.

And even where the love passes into indifference,

as unfortunately it may even where all romantic fervor was present at the start, this is no warrant for ending the relationship or seeking a new one. One of the rebels of our time says that it would admittedly be an act of enslavement to impose marriage on two people who do not desire to marry; and he adds: "But it is no worse to impose a continuation of marriage on people who have ceased to desire to be married." The problem is, however, not the same in both cases. By entering upon marriage, the two people have created a new situation for which there is now a new responsibility. Even, as we saw, where there is no child who needs them, they have touched one another's lives for better or worse by entering upon the union whence normally the children come. They are responsible still for trying to see that this relationship develops the best of which they can prove themselves capable.

But "responsibility" is one of the last words the discontented are willing to hear. "Happiness," "self-expression," "freedom," sound so much more inviting. The circumstance that affection may dwindle under familiarity is one of the chief arguments of the rebels to sanction passing to other unions. But if the woman continues to love the man, does the waning of her charm justify him

in leaving her? Such a step on his part looks perilously like sheer selfishness. Many such blunt words need to be spoken to-day. Terms like "freedom" and "self-realization" are so often repeated in protest against the extremes and the injustices of the past that, necessary though it is to resist tyrannies of every kind, we may easily forget that training in responsibility is still a need the race has not outgrown.

THE SENTIMENTAL SELF AND THE ETHICAL

No life howsoever "freely self-expressed" is going to amount to much if it is not rooted in the power to be faithful to a pledged word when the fidelity has ceased to be a joy. There are obligations which are valid even where the keeping of them is far from happy. The duty of parents to the children of their union is one such imperative. So is that of husband and wife to each other. It is precisely where relationships become irksome that men and women need to assert what is really the human "self" in them. That self is most characteristic of human beings at their best not when it follows the shiftings of caprice, but when it expresses a will to be faithful to trust. People who take marriage lightly speak of freedom as a step in advance. They seem to forget the long,

steep climb which civilization has had to make to reach even such levels as it has already attained and to impose upon the animal impulses even the slight measure of decent self-restraint reached thus far. Happiness is good. But why not think at least as earnestly of duty? Self-expression is good; but it cannot afford to forget the truer self-expression which comes from disciplining the waywardness in one's nature. Freedom is good; but is it possible without loyalty to obligation? It is when we arrive in this way at setting the better self free, that life is made sweet, sound, strong.

Sooner or later we learn that there is many a hardship to which people submit for the sake of the moral principle involved. Whether it be in married life, or business, or citizenship, we may not leave out or subordinate the sense of ethical responsibility and then expect life to be at all admirable. In the world of fancy to which we turn when the realities are unattractive, every one can be free to do quite as he lists, because in such a world it makes no difference what he does with his freedom. But we are living in a world where the slow and painful labor of the generations to establish genuinely human modes of life has achieved as yet only the beginnings. Back of the few thousands of years of civilized life lie vastly

more thousands of the lower kind. We dare not forget how slow the civilizing process has been and how easy it is for a single life to squander the good results far more quickly than they have been acquired. A single day of debauchery for an individual may wreck the health it took years to build up. One generation of undue freedom may in the same way wipe out the spiritual gains of whole centuries. These things the libertarian fails to see. He pleads for the higher type of life where people are joyously free. But the higher types of personality are less likely to be bred by lives that want all irksome restraints lifted the moment they chafe, than by lives which discipline and restrain themselves to release that in the human make-up which is best.

The problem goes back to the false idea that the best which people can get out of their relations with each other is pleasure. This makes of marriage nothing more than a fair-weather voyage; and the harm done by this view need not be commented on further. In practice the hurts are more likely to be avoided and the blessings more likely to enter, if the two people look up together to some objective greater than their own personal likes and dislikes. These pages are trying to suggest such an objective—the task resting on all mankind to

make the superior part of man's nature come into its own. Care for the finest nurture of offspring is one of the most immediate ways of sharing in this overarching enterprise. Or there are all the many good social "causes" in need of men and women to help them. There is work in abundance to take married folk out of themselves.

"One of the most certain facts about marriage is this: that it will fail if there is nothing to hold the mates together except their personal attractions. Married people, no matter how devoted, cannot feed on each other indefinitely. Their love must be fed from sources outside them both, if it is to last and grow." [2]

Even where the two go their own ways each morning to different occupations, a sound education in the uses of leisure will suggest ample ways to spend time together fruitfully. Disintegrating many of to-day's tendencies certainly are. But we need not surrender to them as final. Everything depends upon the values which people can be taught to prize.

WISHING AND MORAL BACKBONE

One other view to counter the romantic mistakes may be offered here. Fortunately not all readers

[2] Richard C. Cabot, *World To-Morrow*, April, 1927.

of fiction make the sentimental views their own, even when the books they read are chiefly of the poorer sort. Their sense of humor comes to the rescue. But at certain stages in their lives, some people are not entirely immune to the attitude which wishes that tangled relationships could be cut as easily as they are in fiction and melodrama. There, when trouble arises, one may be sure that eventually all must somehow turn out right. The villain who caused the woe will either be jailed or executed. The cruel husband will somehow be killed off so that the wife whom he mistreats will now be free to marry the man who appreciates her.

It is curious what multitudes of people find such interpretations of life satisfying. In *If Winter Comes,* the hero and his wife Mabel are mismated. What is the way out? It is all just as lovely as sentimentality can want. The husband is falsely accused of all manner of wickedness. This gives Mabel the opportunity to secure a divorce. In the meantime, however, Nona, the other wife, who loves the hero, has to lose her own husband. The thing is done very simply. The Great War fortunately comes along. The husband enlists and is killed. Nona, who could never believe her hero guilty of the sins that allowed him to get rid of his

wife Mabel, is thus free to marry again; and there you are. The winter is sure to be followed by the spring. It always is in fiction of that kind.

In real life occasionally such escapes from entangling situations do no doubt come; but in the main the way out is not quite so simple. Obstructive husbands or wives cannot be disposed of so lightly. The villains cannot be eliminated offhand. The task of living in the same world with the uncongenial—and living in right ways—is a far more difficult business than just this easy slashing of the knot. But the mischief is that this sentimentalism may encourage in some a very enervating habit of mind, the habit of wishing for the easy solutions instead of bracing themselves to work out right ones.

For marriage tests the ethical fiber in people more searchingly perhaps than any other association. The central problem for all the human race is how people, for all their differences, are to work together at the great business of raising the quality of human excellence. Brothers and sisters, old and young, social group with other group, nation and nation, have this one task in common—to work out modes of living together whereby what is good in the make-up of man can be made endlessly

better. There are times when our failures are so disastrous that it is better to stop and go each his own way. But every such separation should be understood for the thing it is—an expression of failure to meet the fundamental problem. If the view in these pages seems hard, it is because we are all of us tempted to rest content with those easy solutions which do no more than add to the defeats already scored against us. The great need is to keep before our eyes as clearly and steadily as we can the aim which gives grandeur to the whole business of living together at all. And nowhere is there more fruitful opportunity offered to do this than in trying to live successfully with such a diversely compounded being as one's husband or wife.

This chapter has been obliged to limit itself to answering certain mistaken ideas. It may therefore seem to suggest that marriage is nothing more than a dreary exercise in self-repression, or else, as one lady put it, "a curious kind of cross between a dog-fight and the peace that passeth understanding." But its prospects are at least somewhat more inviting. Out of their own success, more men and women than we can count agree with the poet that

there is a love which lasts all through the longest years, and which in increasing degree,

> *Can warm earth's poorest hovel to a home;*
> *Which, when our autumn cometh, as it must,*
> *And life in the chill wind shivers bare and leafless,*
> *Shall still be blest with Indian-summer youth*
> *In bleak November, and with thankful heart,*
> *Smile on its ample stores of garnered fruit.*[3]

Such a boon—forgive the repetition—is granted only to those who try to understand what it asks.

[3] James Russell Lowell, "Love," *Poems* (Houghton Mifflin Company).

CHAPTER IV

WHAT NATURALISM OVERLOOKS

Undue optimism begets the pessimist. If hopes that sound too radiant turn our thoughts to the clouds and shadows, so romantic illusions about marriage, sex life, morality in general, have encouraged numerous assaults—in the name of realism—upon traditional ideals.

There are, indeed, unions which should never be begun or continued. Other protests go still further: "Why remain with any one in the least uncongenial?" "Morality is just fear of neighbors. Its codes represent nothing more than the dog-in-the-manger refusal of older people to let the young generation enjoy what they themselves want but can't have." "Enjoy life in your own way regardless." "Satisfy instinct or suffer." All these attacks have this in common: they confront the demands of the ideal with man's instincts, or his actual behaving mechanism, with sex appetites, with prostitution, and other realities, and ask: "Why try to force life as it is into the prison garment of what the old generation imagines ought to

be?" A typical statement is that of Dr. Freud, "Our ethics has asked man to live psychologically above his means."

Out of this attitude has come to-day's growing literature of disillusion and realism. Young people are notably ready to accept its leadings—in which respect they are no different from what they were in older days. But very little would seem to be gained by turning from the mistakes of romanticism to a "realism" which has its own false thinking too. If there is "bunk" in abundance handed down from the past, there is an ample supply furnished under the date line of the present.

LEVEL DOWN OR UP?

See, for example, the false turn given to-day to the demand for the abolition of "the double standard." The attack was begun by women who protested that it was wrong for society to punish a woman and let her partner in the transgression escape, or that an adulterous husband who blamed his wife for committing a similar offense was like "an embezzler rebuking his partner for not keeping the books straight." Men were accustomed to explain the difference by saying that woman is of a much loftier nature than man, that for the sake of the erring male himself, and for the sake of the

children of his marriage, he must keep her to the higher level. If we are more shocked at misbehavior by a queen than at similar misconduct in a serf, it is because the queenly standard must be much more exalted.

But the feminists of an earlier day, like Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Anna Howard Shaw, retorted, "All this is very lovely, and in part true; but this is not the only reason, or even the chief one, for making the punishment graver. Man has inflicted the heavier penalty, partly out of chivalrous concern for the queenly standard, yes, but largely, if not mainly, because he was boss. Where man is the owner of property and of the power which goes with such possession, he is the one who sets the rules for the governing of the family. He has made the penalties more severe not altogether with the thought of worshiping at the shrine of woman's greater purity. If a high regard for womanhood is so essential, why help to drag it down by sharing her guilt? If all men acted rightly, what cause would there ever be for doubting the paternity of *any* child? So stop this canting about keeping the woman on the loftier plane because womanhood must be so much nobler. Teach our young men a higher regard by your own example."

This was the generally admirable protest of an earlier day. To-day a different accent has been added. It puts the stress not on equal strictness for the two sexes but on equal freedom to transgress.

An instance occurs in Shaw's "Fanny's First Play," a tale supposed to be written by a young lady who has caught the spirit of feminine revolt and evidently caught it to extremes. One of the incidents tells how the young man, who has begun the round of forbidden pleasure, objects loftily when Margaret, his betrothed, even speaks to his street-walker companion. But Margaret, who is only eighteen, stands up fiercely for her rights. She has met the woman in jail. Her eyes, she says, have been opened at last. All innocently she has strayed into a disreputable dance hall and drunk champagne with a perfect gentleman of a stranger; and she is aglow with the delight of having beheld real life, as she calls it, face to face. The argument is: "Why should she not?" If the boy is to have his direct contact with rottenness, with the death that passes itself off for life, why not the girl? Even though she does not at all go to the same extreme as the lad, she insists that she, too, has her right to contact with life's seamy side.

Shaw does not advocate this equality in vice,

but he presents the play as a picture of what is going on in many minds to-day. For the demand for this kind of equality is the way in which many people are indeed reacting against the double standard. They are saying: "If you permit one sex to have its fling, why not the other?" [1]

This, we are assured, is progress. Is it? Does it matter little whether equalization levels up or levels down? Progress is a strange word for moving away from the control of desire to greater indulgence. If a new relation is to be established between men and women, a better basis might conceivably be found than equal falling away from self-restraint. Home, school, church, all the civilizing processes, have had work enough to do through the ages to curb the roving habits in man and to discipline his animal nature. And now when it is proposed that women become equal partners, shall the equality consist in the weakness that men have miscalled strength?

[1] Hear this woman in a recent novel: "Women aren't dull-witted and ignorant any longer. They have minds as quick and versatile as men's. And they want to remain women and enjoy the desires of their womanhood—like men. They want to compete with other women. They want their senses keyed to excruciating ecstasies. They don't want to be wooed and be captured a thousand times by one man, but once by a thousand men. I do. I want romance and variety and excitement." Splendid materials, these three, to make the texture of a life!

NATURAL DOES NOT MEAN EXCELLENT

Plainly there is every need to get our minds clear about these new demands. Ethical control of the sex life is rejected on the ground that individuals must have freedom and that man—and now woman, too—must live "naturally." Leave out of sight for the moment the inconsistency in this plea that freedom means living out one's natural impulses. Natural man, as opposed to man civilized, was certainly not free. He was chained by ignorance, chained by superstitious fears, chained by the brute superiority of the stronger over the weaker. Civilization has been a process of liberating him from these fetters of the natural cave life. "Natural" is by no means synonymous with "excellent."

We hear it said that chastity is hurtful because unnatural, that it is not merely refraining from intercourse, that it also requires freedom from the sheer longing, that such complete continence is impossible, and that the inner conflict, where there is no overt indulgence, is a serious detriment to a person's general mental and bodily health. Assuredly chastity is much more than the observance of a certain outward conduct. An external prudery may convey no hint of the uproar within.

In multitudes of lives, the tug of the suppressed impulses is beyond doubt powerful.

But before we accept the highly debatable conclusion that all abstinence is hurtful, we might well ask one or two questions. If indulgence makes for health, would we not expect to find the strongest minds and wills where sex life is most free? Are the persons who put no rein upon their illicit cravings indeed stronger? Are they less haunted by sex obsessions than those who are stricter with themselves? To judge from their writings and other conduct, their freedom has not at all released their minds from excessive attention to this topic. Nor need we be surprised. A child who gets cake every time he cries for it is at least as likely as other children to be unhappy when he cannot have it—and possibly a bit more tormented by the desire.

If outward abstention produces inner conflict, the trouble may lie in the spirit in which the renouncing is done. We must put by many impulses, for instance, the desire to steal things we ardently crave. We can refrain from the outward acts and still burn with hunger to do them. To avoid these conflicts, should we, therefore, go right ahead to steal? Wisdom might seem rather to suggest that the hurt comes from foregoing only half-heartedly

and that a sound self-control must try to enlist the whole self on its side. Perhaps the libertarians are fooling themselves. They confuse renunciation with a weak substitute. If a half-hearted substitute is no remedy against conflict, this hardly proves that a more thoroughgoing control of the inclinations must do harm. The spirit in which one abstains is everything. We are human to the extent that when illicit longings arise, we turn our minds elsewhere.

Few persons there are who do not at some time or other cherish an ardent, natural desire to smite some other human being—and, of course, for that other being's good. The poet Heine once said that all he wished was a simple little country place with three apple trees, on each of which he might hang three persons. There was indeed a stage in human history where the man who was strong enough to do so might hang and smite to his heart's content, and in the name of justice. But this natural prompting has come under the veto of civilization. The harm done to people so deprived of direct vent for their wrath does not look so very terrifying.

The argument that hurt comes from failure to indulge the sex impulses recalls Sam Weller's famous justification of his natural acquisitive cravings:

"I am very glad to see that you have so high a sense of your duties as a son, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick.

"I always had, sir," replied Mr. Weller.

"That's a very gratifying reflection, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick approvingly.

"Wery, sir," replied Mr. Weller; "if ever I wanted anythin' o' my father, I always asked for it in a wery 'spectful and obligin' manner. If he didn't give it to me, I took it, for fear I should be led to do anythin' wrong through not havin' it."

MAN AND ANIMAL ARE ALSO UNLIKE

Perhaps the fundamental error lies in singling out for attention to-day those traits which man shares with the lower orders and minimizing, if not ignoring, what makes him distinctively human. The psychologists of earlier days were concerned chiefly with man's intellect and gave much less study to the subhuman part of him. Now that so much more is known about man's likeness to the animals, it is his nerves, glands, muscles, and conditioned reflexes that are occupying attention, to the comparative neglect of his superior endowments. Some teachers would have us believe that there is little, if anything, more to man than the behaviors exhibited by beasts as well. This is the view whose practical outcome is so often the counsel: "Follow Nature."

But this advice is altogether too sweeping.

There is nothing so decisive and final about the natural impulses. Man is human to the extent that he can hold his desires up to the light, place them, evaluate them, see them in relation to one another and to a whole scheme of ultimately worthwhile things, and say: "This desire is better; this other must be kept in place." It is a quite elementary fact that not all his desires can be satisfied. Like an animal he may feel a powerful compulsion to sneeze violently, or to spit, or to cough megaphonically. But he cannot follow these promptings and at the same time gratify his desire to remain in decent company.

William James put the matter in his statement that if he could, he would be

> both handsome and fat, and well-dressed, and a great athlete, and make a million a year; be a wit, a bon-vivant, and a lady-killer as well as a philosopher; a philanthropist, statesman, warrior, and African explorer as well as "tone" poet and saint. But the thing is impossible: the millionaire's work would run counter to the saint's; the bon-vivant and the philanthropist would trip each other up. The philosopher and the lady-killer could not well keep house in the same tenement of clay.

This is the reason for many a necessary regulation. The spontaneities on which the anarchistic natures insist have a way of conflicting with each

other not only within the individual himself but also in the contacts of a man with his fellows. Rules of some sort there must be if whim or brute force is not to prevail. These regulations are never perfect; but to dismiss them as taboos, as if they were no different from the prohibitions and curses of primitive society, is scarcely as advanced as it sounds.

To live the life of impulse may do very well for an animal, but not for a human being who must recognize all sorts of decencies, amenities, ideals. To gratify the love impulses promiscuously means that one cannot have the better kind of love, the exclusive love which looks up, which shares responsibility, which unites man and wife in a comradeship of respect. We cannot live "naturally" and at the same time expect to live like civilized beings. The latter are those who bring their very natural leadings under the control of good sense.[2]

[2] "In animals, when passion is on and successful courtship is once well under way, the physical sex act overshadows all else so that nothing but superior outer force can stop it. In human beings of normal grade, on the contrary, with sex impulses just as powerful as in animals, the individual may be so conscious of emotional and esthetic elements, such as beauty, fair-dealing, and love; of social elements, such as consideration, sense of comradeship, and hope of happy family life later; of ethical elements, such as a sense of honor and of respect for others; and of moral and religious elements, such as right and duty and obligation, as to deny himself immediate satisfaction, however tempting, for the sake of higher and more lasting joys later. It is by just such

It is true that we cannot stop wanting forbidden pleasure merely by being ordered to stop wanting. The way to stop wanting wrong things, however, is to want better ones. If one cannot stop thinking, he can at any rate stop thinking about hurtful indulgences by turning his attention to things better.

When we regard man as no more than a creature of desire and gratification, we see this fact about him out of all relation to other facts of certainly no less importance. The desires on which such stress is laid are like the sailors on Columbus' ships. They are needed to run the vessels; but unless they obey the admiral, they may run into ruin. The men under Columbus mutinied. They did not see all that he saw. They complained about the food, the drink, the storms, the darkness, the long, lonely days and weeks of uncertainty and peril. The master mind, too, was quite aware of these realities. But he saw them in the light of the whole voyage and of the months ahead, not merely the day. He was able to envisage not solely the one spot on the map which the ship

power that we can prefer in theory and choose in practise love above lust, happiness above gratification, the welfare of another above a momentary joy—in a word to be a member of a human species above being more brutish and unrestrained than an animal."—T. W. Galloway, *Love and Marriage* (Funk and Wagnalls Company), p. 13.

touched to-day and to-morrow, but land across the seas.

So nobody can deny the existence, the power, and the value, of the primal instincts. Their power is all too evident. Their value when they are rightly directed is immense. The comradeship of men and women united in love, the blessings of parenthood, the many inspirations to excellent achievement which people get from sex attraction and from love of their children, are precious as can be. But these finer fruitages come from keeping the sex impulses under the control of ideals of order, faithfulness, responsibility. Like the men under Columbus, the forces running the ship of life need to be directed.

And as soon as one admits the need for control, the whole plea of "nature and freedom" loses its standing. Not even the school of Freud counsels complete indulgence of the sex impulses.[3] It

[3] A careful reading of the Freudian teachings gives no warrant for the belief that they are all on the side of laxity. Freud well understands how essential it is for men and women to keep their self-control. He holds that such control will be easier in adolescence and afterward if the sublimations are practiced in the pre-adolescent years. He wants the later conflicts and promiscuities to be avoided by a training in which the children are steered safely past the concealed dangers of various fixations or perversions. The false teaching that the Freudian doctrines sanction the perversions and promiscuities comes chiefly from the literary and the immature.

counsels sublimation—turning these impulses into channels where there need be no conflict and no harm. But in the very fact of advising sublimation, such teaching implies that people can use their minds for purposes of direction and control. If they were incapable of directing and controlling their impulses, why advise sublimation rather than unrestrained indulgence?

FREEDOM THROUGH SELF-CONTROL

It is hard to see how people can be human and free on any other terms but those of self-control. There are no worse slaves than those persons who plead for liberty but use their freedom to make themselves victims of their own caprice. They object, and rightly, to external restraints. They would have no person, no man-made custom or institution, fetter them. Yet no tyrants from without ever placed heavier chains upon their victims than are placed upon himself by the slave of sex appetite, the slave of drink, or the slave of very "natural" wrath.

The fundamental question is not at all whether one is going to be bound or be free. It is the far more practical question by *what* we are to be bound—by the undisciplined, capricious part of

us, or by the good sense which marks the higher life.

If this seems needlessly hard, we have only to remember that it is dictated by those very realities on which the rebellious insist. But, fortunately, renunciation need not be the last word. What gives renunciation its bad name is letting the mind dwell on what must be surrendered. Think rather of what is gained. I wish to play the piano; for I yearn to express myself in great music. But when I strike the keys, the sounds carry no suggestion of the wonder I would have them convey. My soul is fettered because my hands are untrained. Expression to the musical aspirations which I feel is a reward that comes from the discipline I need if the fetters are to be struck from the untrained fingers.

Such is the way to the essentially human life. A man cannot be the friend he would be unless he disciplines himself into curbing the ugly side of his nature. He cannot be such a husband or father as he would, except as he trains himself to keep back the merely impetuous or capricious or hateful expressions of himself. Freedom is a reward, not a gift to be picked up at will. Self-expression is the outcome of a life well lived, not the prerequisite—save in the cruder forms encouraged in child-

hood for their educational value—for beginning it.

All freedom worth having is won by accepting life's limitations understandingly. The artist cannot include upon his canvas all the images, lines, and colors that throng his brain. To put into his picture what deserves to be there, he must reject. To make our garden plots grow the flowers we want, we must keep out the weeds. To keep our houses warm within, we build walls to shut out the winds. To cultivate the intimacies which make home life precious, we live in homes that must reject as well as include. Otherwise a home would be no better than the public ward in a hospital, or an old-fashioned orphan asylum, or a street corner. To know well, one must stop dabbling, give up illusion, loose and lazy generalizing. The reward of rejection is the increased mastery over the things of higher value.

. . . The one thing which deepens life, which gives it "resonance," which brings it great joy, is the putting oneself outside oneself into another personality. It is this identification with another personality, and not simply bodily gratification, to which the whole sex-process seems fundamentally to point. The two persons really mated are now one—and yet also two. If marriage is of this identifying sort, the "oneself" becomes "ourselves," and the "I" becomes "we two," in a very actual and vital sense. A woman who dearly loved her husband once told me that in "those first days of married

life" something almost mystical happened. The rather sad, timid, turned-in self she had been for thirty years flew away. She almost waved to it, its departure was so real; and a very joyous, confident self, that was her husband's self and her own new self combined, came into being. . . . If mating fails of this, it seems that it is no real mating. If it does achieve it, then a kind of conjoint personality is developed which, in the highest sense of the word, is creative of new values in life. Sex-life, it seems to me, does not reach its full possibilities unless it reaches this level of creative love.

And then there are the children. Suddenly, on a day, one finds a living creature that has come out of the life of "we two." . . .

What is the matter with those adolescent artists of ours that they cannot capture the wonder and make us feel it? For it seems that if we could be made to feel it; if, as a matter of our everyday thinking, we could be brought to realize that the individual who does not produce a child and live through the growing up of that child, misses the high point of living, I venture to believe that the restless wish of mature men and women to philander around would seem like the wish of a grown-up man still to be playing with toy balloons when he might be about great business.

If we are right in this, then the invitation to pass beyond the erotic level is not an invitation to humdrum, to boredom, to a kind of sour settled-downness. It is the invitation to become co-creators. It is the invitation to live on a level denied to children, denied to adolescents; a level accessible only to those who are mature enough to push out of their half-grown self-enclosedness into creative identification with another life.[4]

[4] Harry A. Overstreet, *About Ourselves* (W. W. Norton Company, 1927).

THE NEW CAN BE FOOLISH, TOO

Another popular misconception is the idea that it is somehow scientific to take the newest word about man's life as necessarily the wisest. But there are new vagaries as well as new truths. Their newness does not make them true. Nor does it follow that if we accept this or that latest finding of the psychologists, we must swallow everything which such men tell us.

When Professor Watson demonstrates that fears regarded by the older psychology as innate are not inborn at all, but are only conditioned reflexes, we owe him thanks. A newly discovered truth about the workings of the human mechanism displaces very properly the older and false belief. But the discovery of the behaviorist about the origin of fears does not oblige us to discard, let us say, our ideals of courage. Though courageous living is surely a very old-fashioned ideal, its antiquity need not lead us to scrap it. Where, furthermore, is there any place in an animal's scheme of life (since behaviorism insists upon the likeness of man and animal) for the moral courage men must exhibit in defense of truths not yet accepted by the multitude? New facts about how the mechanism works cannot tell us what aims people at their best

should set themselves. That these aims are time honored is no reason for holding them outgrown. Nor does it follow that the more crudely biologic or mechanistic the psychology a man prefers, the more penetrating must be his understanding of personality.

More light, by all means. The findings that man is still so largely animal should be examined on their merits. But even if it were true that man is still only caveman, modern intelligence would yet have to raise the fundamental question: "Shall this knowledge be used to keep man in the cave or to try to get him out?"

SOME CONVENTIONS ARE STILL SENSIBLE

Fortunately, young people have not lost all respect for the old and their teachings. The young are not only innovators; they are also disciples, often very wistful in their readiness to follow masters. Indeed, the very ideas by which they are misled to-day, are ofttimes less original with themselves than echoings of older folk. Many have judgment enough to recognize that some things which the past has found good may still be good even to-day and to-morrow, and that the old is not necessarily foolish because it is old, or the new necessarily good because it is new.

Convention, or the taking of an attitude merely because the neighbors approve it, is not monopolized by those who accept a tradition. Revolt, too, has its conventions. There are, indeed, few people more alike than the rebels in Greenwich Village and its imitations. Styles and conventions are found there just as among conformists. Shudder as "advanced" circles may at any such impious suggestion, wisdom is by no means confined to *The American Mercury*. It is possible to take Nietzsche (either directly or at secondhand through Mr. Mencken) or Mr. Russell or Mr. Wells quite as uncritically as many older persons take the Republican party.

"But we know to-day that all morality is only artificial—just a matter of what the neighbors happen to like or not." This sounds more highly enlightened than it is. Granted that to many persons there is no other test of rightness than the opinion of the neighbors, and that neighbors can be gossipy, mean spirited, cowardly, and foolish. This need not condemn everything which they approve. That they value fresh air and good food is no warrant for saying that to prize these is mere convention. The people next door are opposed to theft and killing. This hardly justifies these crimes. They believe that adultery is base. Does

this make moral laxity nothing more than an annoyance to them? Ethical distinctions lose none of their reality from the fact that even shallow-minded neighbors also respect them.

Experience can still tell youth that spontaneity can do dire damage. Respect for the difference between passion and love is no invention of the older generation. The young need hardly be told that there is a calf love, a puppy love, at whose absurdities they themselves are quick enough to smile. When they think of the boys or girls to whom at one time or another they thought themselves ready to be attached forever, they are glad that second thoughts came to the rescue.

But in later youth, too, or in adult life, serious errors are possible. Love can be confused with passion. In the true marriage, the two are blended, and each adds a certain enrichment to the other. But there are distinctions to be remembered. Love is fed by respect and by the understanding which sees over and beyond the frailties that are real enough, the better self which nobody ever succeeds in living out perfectly. Especially is love enriched by the sense of responsibility and by a willingness to give one's self, to bear and forbear, to spend and be spent for the sake of the beloved,

"in the joint pursuit of that always elusive best" in which they are drawn together.

But the passion so easily mistaken for love is a very different thing. It can be excited by persons whom one does not really love at all. When a man is drunk, he can feel intense desire for a woman whom, if he were sober, he would not dream of making his wife. Or the same kind of intoxication may be fostered by a dance. And passion is utterly selfish. It wants only its own gratification. It has no sense of responsibility or respect or devoted self-giving. Its own satisfaction is its be-all and end-all. When passion is appeased, often enough it is content to cast aside the object which has satisfied it and to pass without scruple to some other. Very different this affair of the senses from the love which feels responsibility and loyalty, ennobling the giver and the receiver, because in both it calls out the essentially human traits of understanding and fidelity. What people imagine to be affection may be only the other thing.

Not all parents can put these facts into words. But when they tremble lest their boys and girls confuse love with passion, when they wish to save them from the damage done by hasty, thoughtless unions, are they just the slaves of conventional

morality? Because they want their children to know in time what the true marriage is, they wish to shield them from the spiritual cheapening and other hurt resulting from premature and promiscuous intimacies. To call this solicitude nothing better than fear of one's neighbors, or (with some devotees of Freud) to call it envy of the young, is scarcely scientific on the part of those who plead intellectual progress. To have the courage of one's convictions is good. But often the frank utterances admired as bold make one wonder whether some courage is not the courage of deficient perception.

Modesty is another attitude at which it is easy to sneer as old-fashioned. The claims of privacy will be treated more fully in the next chapter. Here let it be said that modesty still has a part to play in sensible lives. Modesty is protective. While the properly behaved girl is also subjected to insult, the flaunting types are much more likely to attract such attention and to encourage it. There is no need to make a special bid for the leers and worse. The effect on the men is also to be weighed. Many men would prefer to keep their desires in check but find difficulty. They should be helped, not hindered. With commercial interests doing all in their power to inflame the sex impulses, the

least that well-bred women can do is not to encourage the process.

Just where the line is to be drawn cannot be set by definition. Fashions change; and the behavior regarded as indecent this year becomes the accepted mode a year later. But howsoever the styles may change, the better bred always comport themselves in ways which mark them off at once from the other kind. On the bathing beach, in the dance hall, in the parlor, there are unmistakable signs that characterize the lady. The parents who want their daughter to be such a person are protecting her against needless insult and at the same time helping her to help some men remain a bit more civilized. Many manners are undoubtedly nothing more than conventions; but a little reflection will often show how sensible are the reasons for them. Break the conventions when they stand in the way of a genuinely better life. Respect them when they train habits which are still needed.

LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

"If this harm of which you speak is real, why cannot we find it out for ourselves?" There are poisons whose results are deadly. Is it necessary to learn this from one's own hurt? A fine-grained person will want to keep life's deepest intimacies

for the one person who is to be the lifelong partner. To discover that the first partnership has been a mistake and then go to somebody else and then to still another, is impossible without a certain sullying of the personality.

It is a false analogy to say: "If two friends can live together and then separate, why not a man and a woman?" The mating makes an important difference. A union as intimate as this creates a tie whose sundering does a greater hurt, especially to the woman. In the finer grained, such a union counsels an exclusiveness which they cannot think of violating. For those whose fiber is less fine, the unlimited association is a desecration of that privacy which unfortunately they need most. "Experimentation" squanders intimacies too precious for any such loose employment. Pity that some people have learned this through their own bitter experience! There is small need for the young to learn it in the same costly way.

From experimentation elsewhere—in physics and chemistry—assuredly enormous gains have come. There is, however, this vital difference: If an experiment in the laboratory turns out a failure, at the worst only the time and the material have been lost. Gas, test tubes, chemicals, can all

be replaced. But experimentation in sex partnership may wreck a human soul.

There is another kind of experiment which may be suggested: Let the young generation try entering marriage with the thought of adding its testimony to the other good testimonies already written, that in marriage, with its accent on responsibility and loyalty, there are new heights and depths of spiritual excellence to be attained. Nobody pretends that marriage is a perfect institution. Why not do one's part to make it better than it is?

Consider the long ascent of the home throughout its sadly mixed past. The home is as yet far from being an ideal institution. Its noblest possibilities are still ahead. But human beings are already better people than they might else have been, because in the home, in the practice of fidelity between husband and wife, men and women have learned how to carry obligations even where these interfere with happiness. We may well wait before echoing the catchwords of those who assume so quickly that marriage is outgrown and has nothing further to contribute to progress. The ideal homes are still to be created, as the whole ideal society is still in the making. Here is rich opportunity for the experimental spirit.

Now, before every one of us, since every one has personal relations, lies a whole new world to be shaped by creative instinct. There lie the raw materials of glory—the same old primitively necessary human ties without which the race has never been able to exist a moment—mating, parenthood, responsibility of one for another. . . . Some order and discipline there must be—such is the essence of creative art which by order and discipline and intelligence and inspiration creates something finished and beautiful out of raw material. Out of the capacity to scream aloud, the creative impulse has made Wagnerian operas. Out of the hardness and heaviness of stone, it has built up cathedrals to the glory of God. There lies our raw material—the relationship between men and women, between parents and their children.[5]

The naturalistic point of view is a counsel of surrender to that in man which he shares with the lower orders of being. It fails to do him justice. The ethical view pays man by far the handsomer tribute. It regards him as capable of vastly better conduct than he ordinarily exhibits. It holds him able to use his mind to remake the individual and society on statelier patterns. It does him the honor to trust that if becoming what he ought to be has its difficulties, he can rise to this need with good sense and backbone.

[5] Dorothy Canfield Fisher, "A Song to March To," *Survey Graphic*, December, 1927.

CHAPTER V

A PLEA FOR PRIVACY

Any attempt to cultivate the finer attitudes must reckon with the extreme publicity with which the sex life is treated to-day everywhere. This is an age, we are told, of frankness. Are there, however, no limits?

PLAYING UP SEX

There never was a time when the instruments of publicity were operated on a wider scale and more noisily. Day and night our roaring presses turn out their millions of sheets to shout the news, whether important or trivial, everywhere. Advertising posters confront us at every turn. Even the quiet countryside is defaced by them. On the crowded city streets, we may not be reading a newspaper; but somewhere a radio loud speaker is clamoring for attention. There was a time when people used to make "appeals" for funds for charity. Now the word is "drive." People's purses are regarded as a kind of trench on which

huge, widespread assault is to be made, or else people are "droves," to be driven *en masse*.

But if anything makes us persons, in the best sense human, it is the dignity inseparable from a large degree of privacy. While there is much which each of us shares with everybody else, what makes us men and women, is our uniqueness, the fact that you are you and I am I—each something more and better than like units in a huge mass. This personal dignity is threatened from many quarters in our age of machinery, giant organization, and rampant publicity.

Nowhere is this more so than in to-day's publicity with regard to sex. The sex life is one of the most engrossing of perennial interests. What would the world's art be if the two sexes had no dealings with each other? Sex touches life almost everywhere. It is nature's way of securing reproduction of the higher organisms. In many a life it feeds the deepest springs of comradeship, of beauty, of inspiration. By it men and women are stirred to undreamed of efforts. It is the occasion for the greatest of joys and for the worst of miseries.

But the harm done to-day is in the fact that just one phase of the sex life is being played up on the widest scale and with all the vividness and power

which modern mechanical organization can supply. Sex may suggest to us motherhood. It may suggest chivalry. It may speak of the beauty which is the symbol of a spiritual grace. It may mean that blending of passion with love and high respect which characterizes the true marriage. But these are certainly not the features most advertised in the pictures, the jokes, the stories, the plays, so widely circulated now. To-day's sex obsession is notorious for thrusting before people's attention one fact about sex more than any other, namely, the gratification of the senses.

Some twenty years ago a writer submitted a story to a fairly respectable magazine. It was rejected. One of the scenes, though told briefly, was regarded as improper. Ten years later the man sent it unchanged to the same magazine. He received word from the editor: "If you will amplify this one scene, we shall accept your story." [1] A generation ago, novels on the religious life dealt with the problem of the clergyman forced to choose

[1] Comparison with better standards is instructive. Shakespeare, we are informed, is out of date because he evaded the "realities." But is any theme better fitted for "realistic" treatment than a son's discovery that his mother is an adulteress? Yet, when Shakespeare handled this subject, he certainly did not play up the sin. He had the good taste to take it for granted and pass on to the problem which it laid upon Hamlet. This is all the more notable because Shakespeare's day was far from squeamish in talking about the body.

between an old faith and new knowledge. To-day one of the best sellers also deals with the life of a preacher; but the chief interest is in the man's amours.

Commercialism is busy making sure that this interest is gratified.[2] A neighborhood movie theater sends out a post card telling of the treat in store for the audiences. The point played up is the fact that the gay heroine has a roll of money hidden on her person; and the audience is invited to come and see how the two men get the money away. One wonders whom to pity the more, the men and women who sell themselves to make money out of supplying this corruption, or the heads with so little worth while to fill them, that this is the kind of evening's entertainment they buy. There are people who drive to these places in their own cars. They would be overwhelmed with shame at the suggestion that they were so poor in pocket as to be obliged to wear last year's clothes. But they are not at all ashamed of the inner poverty which can enjoy such joys as it does.

The evil will hardly be met by censorship. The censorship exercised by the State is just as likely to do its own grave damage. The best censorship

[2] See *Survey Graphic*, September, 1927, for an account of how child audiences are gone after, and what they get.

is provided by the spectators themselves. When people develop in their lives the tastes, the elevated interests, the standards, that mark the cultivated, they will kill off the demand which the poorer amusements are there to supply. It is not the officers of the law who give us our best protection. It is what George Eliot called "the spiritual police of sentiments, or ideal feelings."

It is true, of course, that we are all human beings, neither sexless angels nor all ascetic saints. Acquaintance with the animal side of life is not necessarily defiling. But undoubted damage is done when the life of sex is made, as it is in so much popular amusement, the occasion chiefly for a grin and a leer. Especially is this so for the young, who have not yet built up in themselves securely those sentiments and habits of thought and practice which most protect against pollution. The way to develop a taste for good music is to hear just as much of the best as can possibly be heard. The way for children to learn to speak good English is to hear most of the time the best of English in the classroom and at home. Once they have learned what the "feel" of good music and of excellent speech is, then, when they come upon the many different grades of music or speech, they are in a better position to rate what they hear

as first-rate or poor. When they have already cultivated a rich, living sense of what constitutes sturdiness or other excellence of character, they are better able to tell whether the conduct they see around them in the plays is to be admired or detested.

The great danger in being too frequently exposed to immorality or vulgarity is that one may grow so accustomed to it as to lose, or fail to acquire, a compelling sense of how cheap and how shabby it is. "The light by which we see," said Emerson, "comes from out of the soul of the observer." To keep the soul of the observer, especially of the young observer, clean and discriminating is worth all the best efforts of home, school, church—all of us. Because that light is fed best when life's privacies are respected, we may well consider what is offered by this way, among others, of keeping the inner luminary clean.

IGNORANCE NO PROTECTION

What makes the problem difficult is the fact that unquestionably there is much knowledge which must now be passed on when the recipients are quite young. Ignorance and innocence are in themselves no safeguard. There is a hygiene of sex as important to understand as the hygiene of

digestion. It should be imparted not as a separate study, but incidentally in its due setting among other facts in biology or hygiene or ethics. Moreover, the day will come when young people will ask questions, and often extremely specific questions, about birth or birth control. They should be answered honestly in terms which they can understand and with as much information as they are prepared, at their age, to take in without too prolonged attention to this one topic. The mistake of former days was in supposing that this knowledge would somehow come of its own accord. Because it did come, but often from corrupt or ignorant sources, we do better now to have such knowledge offered by informed and responsible people.[3]

There is much that will still have to be taught. For example, howsoever the specialists may disagree as to the advantages of mating for adults, no reputable body of psychiatrists will advise on grounds of hygiene that those whose life habits are still in the making indulge in sex intercourse. There are adults whose powers of self-control have been so badly impaired that the self-discipline imposed by normal persons seems a hopeless recommendation; but no physician who has regard for the entire personality will counsel a mode of living

[3] Consult the manuals by Bigelow, Exner, Galloway, Gruenberg, Wile *et al.*

in which the power to keep steady control is surrendered—especially in youth.

Every addition to the new psychology brings its misinformation for some. A young lad at college informed his father that the thing to do was to sublimate the sex impulses: "Turn them off into harmless channels." "Yes? How?" Older fellows to whom he looked up because they could talk about the new books had told him that the way to sublimate sex desires was to look at pictures of nude women. The poor boy took this advice and supplied the walls of his room liberally with such pictures.

OLD ERRORS AS NEW "SCIENCE"

When our young people reject what they blithely call "apple-sauce" in traditional ethics, they do not always escape accepting what is apple-sauce in the substitute. Much that is palmed off to-day as a new morality demanded by the young is neither new nor the demand of youth. It is as old as the oldest plea for self-indulgence. Often, too, it comes from older people, not from the young at all. The salacious Broadway play is not put on because mere boys and girls demand it. It is presented to give amusement to the jaded appetites of middle-aged and older people who have

killed off in themselves the taste for better recreations. The unspoiled taste of the young would be satisfied with something better. But what is offered to them as freely as to their elders is the stuff deliberately prepared to satisfy the cravings of appetites already spoiled by the years. It is like putting before a healthy boy of twelve the menu prepared in the costly restaurant for a jaded gourmand. Food intended for appetites already degraded is dished up for appetites still capable of loving a simple, wholesome diet.

Much in the philosophy of revolt does not originate with youth at all. It comes from older folk who may be rationalizing their own looseness. Or it may come from older people who for other reasons no longer have faith in the time-honored ideals of restraint and self-control. Or it may come from physicians forgetful of the fact that a treatment recommended for an old neurotic who has lost the power to change his mode of living will never strengthen the will power of lives that are still in the shaping. Or it may come from excellent and intelligent people who nevertheless are here in error, perhaps because their entire philosophies, like Bertrand Russell's, are too individualistic. All of us have our blind spots.

It is curious, too, that all this emphasis upon

sense gratification should come from those who plead the claims of personality and of the right to be one's self and individual. The claim to self-expression deserves all honor when it insists that human souls must be their own masters. The sense of freedom, of uniqueness, and individuality, is a priceless support to personal dignity. But this eminently deserving claim to individual integrity can be more enlightened than it often is in those who advance it. There is nothing less individualized about people than the capacity to give or to receive sense gratification. The ability to satisfy a boy's physical cravings can be met by any girl with physical attractiveness. But love worships its object as above all else unique. It asks that the life companion be loved as the distinctive personality. But it is only in the spiritual part of us that we are thus individual.

Even where the plea is made for free companionship without undue emphasis on the physical gratification, the same truth holds. To live in intimacy with one person touches all the deepest fibers that lie at the core of personality. This is one reason why a genuine love insists upon exclusiveness and permanence. To pass from one such relation to another is impossible without a certain cheapening which the better grained are

quick to understand and to feel. If the rebels only valued uniqueness as understandingly as they say they do, they would never advocate what is really one of the surest ways to sully and profane it.

"FRANKNESS" AND TASTE

Whether the knowledge which people need is of physical hygiene, or mental, or moral, there is much that should not be learned in the costly school of experience, but which should be taught, so far as it can be taught, by print or spoken word. There are homes unfitted to speak the needed words. But even admitting the case for publicity at its best, we must remember that what to say, when to say it, and how to say it, are of prime importance. There are things it is better not to spread too unreservedly into the light of day, especially before whole groups.

This may sound surprising. As a general rule, is not candor to be preferred to concealment? "Why not be frank about the things every one sooner or later knows?" But it is one thing to say that knowledge is necessary and another thing to forget how much knowledge is good at any given time, and also under what circumstances the knowledge should be imparted. Assuredly, we all need

knowledge about the workings of the human body. There are times when the very plainest speaking about this subject is necessary. But because a physician must ask certain questions in the privacy of his office about the workings of the digestive organs, this is slight justification for talking about digestive functions at the dinner table. Some people undoubtedly do love to speak at all times and places about their liver complaints. But what kinds of people? To talk "frankly" in any and all sorts of company is not necessarily a sign of advanced mind. It may be the sign of obtuseness.

Not all types of discussion, moreover, are alike in their effects. Everything depends upon the level and the atmosphere. In some circles, men and women can discuss sex problems together with a fineness which is highly beneficial. Some inhibitions are mawkish and needless; and the removal of them is a gain. But there is also a danger that these discussions in mixed company may unduly stimulate the sex impulses. One may discuss the hygiene of foods—for example, the hurtful effects of bad cooking—without necessarily arousing the desire for an indigestible steak. Talking about sex, however, may be for some people too exciting an experience. The purveyors of salacious entertainment know this well enough. They declare

that their offerings are designed to teach moral lessons. They know only too well, however, that the purchasers also want the thrills. And even where there is the most honest desire in the world to convey sound instruction, the risk of thus arousing the most difficult of all the appetites to control, is still there.

ABILITIES TO UNDERSTAND VARY

Furthermore, it is easy to forget in pleading for publicity, that not all who receive the information are as well prepared as others to derive its real benefits. No astronomer would gather up a heterogeneous crowd and say, "Come in and listen to this lecture of mine on astronomical mathematics." He would know that in such a gathering, some were fitted to understand him and others were grossly incompetent. At the worst, the only harm would be that those who could not understand him would be bored and count their time wasted.

Yet in to-day's publicity, not only are all these differences ignored, but the hurt which is done is far graver. Young and old, people of judgment, and people too immature to know the facts, will see the same play on adultery offered, forsooth, in the name of teaching necessary truths. But how can the inexperienced adolescent weigh and consider

the truth in a performance of that kind? The experience, the insight, the riper culture and character, which can distinguish between a true self-expression and the sophistries of mere self-indulgence, take more than a high-school diploma to develop. Consider only how sadly even mature persons who ought to know better can be guilty of grave errors of judgment. Then think of offering to those who have not even maturity, the same problem to pass upon. We are not all equal. In spite of the fact that some young people are more sensible than some older ones, by and large, youth has not the background against which to evaluate all ideas about life.

When we plead then for a certain postponement, we are not guilty of cowardice, or evasion, or hypocrisy. There are many things which it is well the young should not have until they have reached the proper age. We may agree or not that smoking is hurtful to adults. But whatever benefits adults may or may not derive from smoking, children get nothing but harm. The same is true about stimulants like alcohol or even coffee. It is better at certain stages in life that people should not take these stimulants. Few will deny that it is wiser for young people to postpone the highly necessary function of earning their own living. Everybody

should be self-supporting, but not during the age when his major energies must be spent in learning at high school or college. Marriage is another interest in need of a certain postponement. Much as we want our boys and girls to marry before they are too old, it is better that they defer marriage until they can be more sure they are not making fatal mischoices.

All these considerations apply to the matter of the knowledge about sex now dished up indiscriminately to young and old alike. There are some things we are better able to understand at fifty than when we were thirty, and some that we can be less hurt by dwelling upon at thirty than at fifteen. The boy who enjoys a great novel at sixteen knows that at ten he would not have understood it. It is not unlikely that, if he keeps on exercising his brains, at twenty he will appreciate other books which are now beyond him. Or is the summit of wisdom reached whenever one insists that it is?

PRIVACY AND SELF-RESPECT

Most of all must we plead the point that even in transmitting necessary information, we do best when we honor the claims of privacy. It is far better for the parent to speak with his child alone

than for a teacher to address a whole class. Even here in this more intimate communication, there is an art to be cultivated, that of leaving some things unsaid, letting the child either draw his own conclusions in silence, or read a pamphlet or a book for himself.

To make this point clear, consider again the relationship between reticence and privacy on the one hand and the sense of personal dignity. In the long run, our chief resource against debasing views or practices must always be a lofty sense of personal worth, of respect for the depths of selfhood in others and in one's self. One way to the building up of this regard is to use every resource to strengthen and to enlighten the sense of privacy. There is a kind of publicity or commonness which tends to cheapen people or make them literally common. The great need is to raise and to support that which makes a person uncommon or human in the best sense.

In the use of property, some objects—a public park, an art gallery, a public library, or a musical recital—are all the better for being enjoyed together. But a home, if it is not to be just walls and a roof, is a true home to the extent that it is not shared by everybody but is our own. There are some tools, like railroads, which are the more

serviceable for being common carriers. But the more closely the sense of personal dignity is affected by the tools we use, the more essential it is that they be absolutely private. Very few, it is to be presumed, would dispute that a handkerchief had better be strictly personal property. Even the most extreme Communist would admit that some things are rather to be owned and used by one person alone.

There are other kinds of sharing to which a sensitive nature objects. Such a nature does not intrude. It is unwilling to be intruded upon. It shows its grain when it respects the sense of privacy even in those against whom it has a grievance. Even those who are not particularly fine in their own fiber object, nevertheless, to being rebuked in public. When the head of an office knows there is a criticism or a blame highly necessary to impart, he conveys it like a gentleman where nobody else can hear. To build up a true self-respect in a child, we do well not to lecture him in the presence of brothers or sisters. There was a time when an offender against the law was exposed in the stocks or in the pillory in the public square. It was imagined that the degradation was wholesome for both the transgressor and the spectators. But exactly the opposite was true. The chief safe-

guard against transgression is to build up so strong a self-respect that a man will be above doing the wrong. But one can think of nothing more likely to batter down that self-respect than the humiliation of exposure in the pillory. And to the spectators the sight was also hurtful. It coarsened them. It made it easier for them to grow familiar with the sight of degradation; and this familiarity with the shame of another did its part to blunt the sense of shame in themselves. In the name of progress, we may easily fall back into this old error. The roots of strong personality are nurtured by protecting in every way possible the sense of privacy.

Such a respect is not at all a mere convention. You lend a man a book in which you have left a letter. He reads the letter. He does not do you any harm thereby; for the letter contains no secret. You are not harmed; but he is hurt in being that much less of a gentleman. Extended argument cannot explain this fact to him. If he does not feel it for himself, it is because something is missing in him. The point is true about many acts of good manners. There is a kind of taste which cannot always be formulated precisely for every single situation. The line between good manners and bad may be as fine as the finest hair, just as one-

sixteenth of an inch divergence in the drawing of a curve may make all the difference between an artistic sketch and a poor one. But it is precisely the observing of this difference that makes the one piece of work better than the other.

If this is true about matters of taste and manners, it is still more important about sentiments with regard to looking in upon the facts of sex. It is because sex is so bound up with the intimacies most profoundly making for character that we want children protected from the vulgarizing which may attend even the most sincere desire to give needed information. The deeper meanings of life are best taken into hearts and minds in the hours of silence. The spoken words say most to us when we reflect upon them in solitude. Whatever encourages respect for such privacy is a help to that sense of genuinely human dignity which underlies the worthiest behaviors.

Many parents are unfitted either to appreciate this fact or to know how to impart the necessary information without the attendant hurt. For this reason we must look to other agencies such as the schools. But every time there is passed on to other people a task which should rather be performed by the home, there is risk of forgetting whose business such a task is. The home is the place where

the children should be closest to those who teach them. The home, precisely because it is the private sanctuary, is the place where the intimate side of life should receive its most careful nurture. If any home is now unfit to discharge this function properly, then our aim, let us not forget, should be to make it fit. For the schools to do now what the homes fail to do is only a second best.

FIRST BUILD UP STANDARDS

The best antidote against the huge doses of vulgarity and corruption so freely offered on every hand is to make just as appealing as we can the beauty and the sacredness of the positive excellences. Only a better love, freely cherished, can liberate from bondage to a lower. When a man is in danger of playing the coward, it is the love of honor that best overcomes the love of safety.

This is the answer when our young people come to us and say: "The picture of life which you drew for us was too idealistic. You did not tell us about these ugly realities. If you had, we should be less shocked or pained when we read about them or come upon them in the actual world around us."

Our reply is: "It is better to have only the necessary minimum of information about evil and the utmost acquaintance with good. How does one

learn to spell correctly? Occasionally it is useful to see just what errors in spelling are commonly made. But our chief reliance is to put into the learner's hands books where the words are spelled correctly. To learn new words, the teacher placards the correct spelling where it can be seen all day for a week. You learn the right forms chiefly by being brought up in surroundings where only these right ones are kept before the eyes. Can we teach arithmetic by harping on instances of bad mathematics? Can we develop your taste for music by having you listen to poor performances? Can we teach sanity of thought by frequent study of the ravings of the demented?" "To peek and poke," as Henry S. Canby put it, "among the intimate failings of soiled lives" is a poor way to understand how to live greatly.

Read, for contrast, these paragraphs in which a statesman characterized the wife who had been his closest partner in all that both of them counted worth living for:

> She knew the destiny of the world from what she herself aspired to reach. The woods and fields changing their beauty with the seasons—but always beautiful whether drenched with rain, clad with snow, or glistening in the sun; London with its confusions of peace and noise, quiet and bustle, indulgence and sacrifice, luxury and poverty; Lossiemouth, with its sea now tempestuous,

now calm, its expanse of sky and dark sparkling nights, its seafaring hardships and holiday delights; men and women with their joys and sorrows, their encouragements and their hopes deferred, their strengths and their weaknesses; Magdalene, Rachel, Mary, each with her offering and her worship, all touched her soul and charmed it into music.

She was like a girl who had just left school and who was finding the world a delightful wide place full of intense interest, and whom the world was finding to be an attractively strange mingling of childlike innocence and mature common sense. . . . Living humanity, working humanity, poverty-stricken humanity, was her nearest kindred. With it she was never demonstrative, over it she never gushed. She just liked to be with it, to minister unto it; and there was a quiet strength about her presence that was more consoling than expressed sympathy. . . .

She lived most truly when the day's work was done, when the world was shut out and the lamps were lit, and when I was at home. Her tenderness showed itself in the lights she chose. She always preferred the yellow light of lamps, with their rich dark shadows behind on the walls and their deep darkness in the room spaces. Then she sat, sewing and darning in the narrow circumference of light, whilst I read aloud from some book or other generally far removed in its thoughts from our everyday battles.[4]

To read one such biography, and to reconstruct in imagination the kind of relationship in which

[4] J. Ramsay MacDonald, *Margaret Ethel MacDonald* (Thomas Seltzer, 1924). See also the list of biographies on p. 46.

these two persons must have lived, is better than to know any amount of the poorer histories.

Taste is cultivated by becoming just as familiar as possible with the performances in which good taste is honored and promoted. Sound knowledge and sound craftsmanship grow by feeding the mind on sound achievements. The moral excellence which includes and transcends taste and knowledge, is nourished in the main by the same method—a minimum acquaintance with corrupt life but only the necessary minimum. Of the positive excellences there can never be a maximum. The longest life is none too long in which to cultivate the utmost acquaintance with the best.

In the forefront of such acquaintance should go the practices, the knowledge, the loves and inspirations which feed and enrich the awareness of the inner sanctuary. The chief need is a sense of personal dignity which will permit itself neither to be cheapened, nor to trespass upon the worth of another. If "the light by which we see comes from out the soul of the observer," most fortunate are those who walk in a light as pure as the best of teaching and conduct can make it.

CHAPTER VI

PREPARATIONS

Two shall be born the whole wide world apart.
. . . . . .
Yet one day out of darkness, these shall stand
And read Life's meaning in each other's eyes.

A true marriage, like every other outreaching toward right relationship, is an unending process of spiritual discovery. When the artist assembles his lines, masses, and colors, in a noble composition, he sees as a result a still grander beauty, beyond his power to transfer to his canvas. Likewise the scientist, when he puts together his facts and infers from their relationship some new interpretation of Nature's laws, has his mind lighted up with a fresh suggestion of far-reaching unities. So men and women, when they seek to join their lives on the best of patterns, discover a greatness which their hearts tell them all life should wear always. There is no higher service which people can render than thus to assist each other to see more deeply and truly into the worthwhileness of life than either could read alone.

Here is what the British Prime Minister, already quoted, said of his wife:

To turn to her in stress and storm was like going into a sheltered haven where waters were at rest, and smiling up into the face of Heaven. Weary and worn, buffeted and discouraged, thinking of giving up the thankless strife, . . . I would flee with her to my Buckinghamshire home, and my lady would heal and soothe me with her cheery faith and steady conviction, and send me forth to smite and be smitten. No one, not even I, can tell with accuracy how much of the steadiness there is in the Labour movement in this country is due to her.[1]

This is the word of Madame Curie about her husband:

In our life together, it was given to me to know him as he had hoped I might, and to penetrate each day further into his thought. He was as much and much more than all I had dreamed at the time of our union. My admiration of his unusual qualities grew continually. . . . His tenderness was the most exquisite of blessings, sure and helpful, full of gentleness and solicitude. It was good to be surrounded by this tenderness; it was cruel to lose it after having lived in an atmosphere completely permeated by it.[2]

That countless marriages, in the light of such an ideal, are a grim jest, is true. The mockeries

[1] Iconoclast, *J. Ramsay MacDonald* (Thomas Seltzer, 1924).
[2] Marie Curie, *Pierre Curie* (The Macmillan Company, 1923).

are glaring enough, according to not a few persons, to warrant branding the whole institution as a failure. But before we accept this view, let us ask whether other needed institutions are flawless; let us consider what are the tests of success, and then see whether society is yet bankrupt in those agencies by which the failures can be prevented and the better outcomes made somewhat more certain.

MARRIAGE NOT THE ONLY FAILURE

Marriage is certainly not the only institution whose score lacks a total of complete triumphs. The artists will tell us that not every picture which a man paints is a masterpiece or even worth exhibiting. He may do a dozen poor ones before he creates a single good one. Is his art therefore a failure? Managers of theaters do their utmost to secure and to stage successful plays. But in spite of experience, trained calculation, and sober hopes, many a play must be withdrawn quickly. Stores and other business enterprises fail, notwithstanding the shrewdness of merchants and of the banks which lend the money. Do laboriously planned inventions always pan out?

The granting of votes to everybody has surely not justified all the enthusiastic hopes of 1776,

1789, and the Reform Bills in Great Britain. The failures of democracy are so striking that many people to-day are gazing longingly at the European dictatorships which, instead of asking the votes of the uninformed, are putting all power into the hands of a few. Or think of the men and women who graduate from college with little visible indication that the four years spent there have done them any too much good. Shall we say therefore that colleges should be abolished and democracy sent to the junk heap? Marriage has abundant company among the institutions which are marked by failure, but which, all in all, get a needed work done. Before we scrap these institutions, it might not be altogether foolish to see how they can be made to do their work better.

When we think how great a demand marriage makes upon good sense, good humor, patience, kindliness, tact, and self-control, the question must often arise not only why so many unions fail, but why so many of them succeed. Mrs. Wembridge mentions a conversation she had on this problem with a working girl who said, "You wouldn't believe people could make it. But look at the boobs that do!" Many of the successes may be due to just "dumb luck." But more fundamental reasons play their part as well. There is more goodness

in people, and more sense, than one would suppose after one has fixed attention on the records of the divorce court. Both these requisites can be considerably assisted. The prosperous unions can be increased and encouraged by an understanding of the nature of genuine success and by a serious, unending effort of home, school, church, all society, to bring the healthiest of all good influences into full play before marriage and after.

COMMERCIALIZED VULGARITY AND VICE

Youth needs recreation, color, romance, adventure, beauty. Many a young person drifts into sex transgression in the quite innocent quest of these. To the social responsibility which this imposes many communities are as yet unawakened. Take a walk through any of the poorer quarters of almost any town or city to-day. Look at the huddled tenements on the bleak, ugly streets. The writer spent a summer in a city of three hundred thousand people, where among the show places pointed out to visitors, are skyscrapers on the New York model. But there were only three or four comparatively small parks, and in none were there concerts or any other recreations of a wholesome kind offered by the city. Put yourself at the place of the young people in the poor districts on the hot

summer nights. The recreations open to them were not provided, as schools are, with an eye single to the best needs of the young. The pleasures were all offered by commercial interests —the usual noisy, vulgar, silly, miniature Coney Islands—run with no thought of meeting the creative needs of the young, but with a view to coaxing the nickels and the dimes out of them. Youth hungering for company and recreation could get these only in places intent on making money by whipping up the shabbiest and least constructive of their young appetites. It is small wonder that many boys and girls go wrong in circumstances like these.

When we reflect how persistent is the pressure of many unlovely forces in much of to-day's so-called civilization, the drab, cheerless, squalid neighborhoods, the monotonous, over-mechanized work, and the mechanized amusements, the real marvel is not that some, or even many, go astray. It is rather that more do not. In the presence of the boys and girls who are brought up in the worse neighborhoods and yet come out clean, one feels like taking off his hat in respect for the good life which wins out over so many handicaps. But there are weaker ones there; and a society fully awake to its responsibilities would lift many a handicap

now too severe for these. What our more socially minded communities in America are doing, every community should do, and then still more.

MARRIAGE AND INCOME

In the second place, a better organization of the world's work and a better vocational training would enable many persons to marry earlier than now, to bear children and bring them up properly. Men and women who shoulder the task of rearing offspring are much less apt to drift into mischief than those who have no such care. Other things being equal, man and wife are more likely to respect each other when they think of each not chiefly as means to gratification, but as parents bound by a sacred obligation to their young. In many a home the child is literally the moral savior of its parents. Society must do more than it has ever done to make genuine homes possible for everybody.

In city, town, and country, there are still houses unfit for human habitation. "The home is the foundation of society." When this sentence is repeated by comfortable folk with never a thought to the many so-called homes where the most elementary decencies are lacking, it is not surprising that the radical rages.

The whole problem of marriage to-day is com-

plicated by these economic influences.[3] Many of us are prone to think of marriage in terms of the homes of an earlier day. Contrast the idyllic picture in Whittier's "Snow Bound" with the city flat of two rooms (including kitchenette and "collapsible" dining room) out of which the two people hurry for the evening's entertainment to the movie palace. In many such an apartment, the only joint undertaking, once the rooms are furnished, is to wash the can-opener and other utensils after the evening meal. To a generation entering maturity amid such economic settings, talk of joint responsibility must often sound remote and unreal.

So must the words about the effects of parenthood upon the personality of father and mother. Great numbers are afraid to have children because they cannot afford to. In some apartments, the landlord will not permit children. In others the cost of the additional rooms is a much more effective restriction. Some couples take up residence in the suburbs; but not all can afford to move so far away from the only places where they can find work. So important are all these economic considerations that one can scarcely blame those who

[3] See Paul H. Douglas, *Wages and the Family* (University of Chicago Press, 1925).

grow restive under the statement that "eventually" society must assist its young people by lifting these economic handicaps. "Make it snappy" is a retort not wholly without reason.

HEALTH EVEN IN A SICK WORLD

But many excellent reforms can hardly be put through in a day. No sane person now regards war as anything but an evil to be abolished. And there are diseases that will have utterly disappeared—some day. But with all the best will in the world, these necessary changes cannot be effected at once. And even if the economic changes alone could be instituted immediately, these helps are important only as they minister to what must never be overlooked as the chief need: what use one is to make of life's gifts. There are men and women with plenty of money whose principles are cheap and shabby. The occupants of the two-room apartment of to-day are not shut out from the wisdom and the inspirations that make living first-rate.

Our main resource, in a word, must be educational—in spite of the dull, uninspired business which that unhappy term so often suggests. The best results of living together are more likely to come to those who fit themselves to receive them.

Success in love is an art to be cultivated. It does not grow up just by itself. In gardens often it is only the weeds which thrive best when left to themselves. The roses require the right soil, enough sunlight, water, protection against pests and cold. The flower of successful marriage demands cultivation; and it can be begun years before the vows are spoken.

LEARNING TO LIVE TOGETHER

The time to begin is in babyhood. Right living with other people requires a self-control which can be practiced long ere the future wife or husband can say the word or understand it. "Give to a pig whenever he grunts; and you get a good pig. Give to a child whenever he grunts; and you will get another good pig."

Brothers and sisters, or classmates in school, are unwittingly training one another for successful marriage in expecting one another to be considerate and in honoring one another for being unselfish. "Charlie's tastes and mine are so much alike!" declared his betrothed. "Yes," replied his father. "You care more for Charlie than for anything else in the world, and so does he." Those who know such Charlies will be none too fervent in con-

gratulating the bride. Mothers can spoil the marriage of a son years before it begins. One of the surest ways is to coddle him unduly.

The girl too may fail in the essentials which the right early training would encourage. Wise spending is one of these.

The woman's standards of life, her tastes in dress and food and living quarters, become a part of her, a matter of habit; and if marriage carries with it the denial of accustomed luxuries, she is likely to feel that marriage is a failure. The same thing may happen in the case of the man, or both man and wife may feel that married life entails too great a cutting down of personal expenditures. This problem is of course greatest among those who fall within the group that we vaguely call the middle class. It is not confined however to members of this group. It is generally felt more keenly by women than men because women are likely to be called upon for the greater sacrifice of former standards. The first pinch is often felt in the necessity of giving up recreations formerly taken as a matter of course. At times the problem is not consciously faced and settled by discussion, but each struggles to get his or her share of spending money with a feeling that the other is unjust and selfish. There is no way of statistically knowing how large a problem in marriage this economic element has become, but those familiar with the inner disputes and final breakdown of family affection regard it as one of the most important causes of trouble. The sense of shame felt by the individuals concerned often leads them

to conceal this part of their family discord and to stress something else.[4]

It would be too much to expect everybody to live as simply as some do; but one or two comparisons may be suggested. Minds like these, loving the things which are more excellent, keep money-values secondary:

Our honeymoon trip was from Friday afternoon till Monday. Only two days away from his duties; but we had such glories of sea and sky, hill and valley, such wealth of mountain laurel in royal bloom, that its happiness has lasted all the way through life. . . .

My husband entered Harvard in 1871. No mother ever had more joy in sending her boy to college than I had in helping him go, but in these days, no mother takes so many stitches for her boy. Ready-made clothes were not the fashion. With my sewing machine I made for my husband every garment he wore except his outer one. A tailor cut and basted the suit of clothes, but my busy hands did all the rest.[5]

This is what Madame Curie writes in her biography of her husband:

We were married in the simplest way. I wore no unusual dress. . . . Our first home, an extremely simple one, consisted of an apartment of three rooms. Our

[4] Ernest R. Groves, *Social Problems and Education* (Longmans, Green and Company, 1925), p. 150.

[5] Isabel C. Barrows, *A Sunny Life* (Little, Brown and Company, 1913).

means did not permit our having servants, so that I had to assume practically all the household duties, as I had been in the habit of doing during my student days. . . . I was preparing to take an examination for a teaching post. . . . We spent our rest days and our vacations walking or bicycling either in the country near Paris, or along the sea, or in the mountains.[6]

Or to cite from a successful marriage of the present age:

. . . We just did not care about doing things that happened to cost money. We never did care in our lives, and never would have cared, no matter what our income might be. Undoubtedly that was the main reason we were so blissful on such a small salary in University work—we could never think, at the time, of anything much we were doing without. I remember that the happiest Christmas we almost ever had was over in the country, when we spent under two dollars for all of us. We were absolutely down to bed-rock that year anyway. Carl gave me a book, "The Pastor's Wife," and we gloated over it together all Christmas afternoon! We gave each of the boys a ten-cent cap-pistol and five cents' worth of caps—they were in their Paradise. I mended three shirts of Carl's that had been in my basket so long they were really like new to him,—he'd forgotten he owned them!—laundered them, and hung the trio, tied in tissue paper and red ribbon, on the tree. That *was* a Christmas!

He used to claim, too, that, as I got so excited over five cents' worth of gum-drops, there was no use investing

[6] Marie Curie, *Pierre Curie* (The Macmillan Company, 1923).

in a dollar's worth of French mixed candy—especially if one hadn't the dollar. . . .

From having seventy-five dollars spending money a month before I was married, I jumped to keeping two of us on sixty dollars, which was what was left after the rent was paid. I am not rationalizing when I say I am glad that we did not have a cent more. It was a real sporting event to make both ends meet! And we did it, and saved a dollar or so, just to show we could.[7]

In general, whatever behaviors make for sound human character are likely to make for better marriage. Chief among these traits are the unselfishness already mentioned, and the power to use freedom. To train children to manage sensibly the freedom which comes with growing up is as fundamental a need as there is. This is why it is good for children to want to think for themselves, even though in so doing they often run counter to the orders of home and school. To desire to be one's own master is much more hopeful than to be always sweetly docile and obedient.

But the real problem of liberty begins only at the point where external pressure has been lifted. Once one is obliged to do his own directing of his life, there is far greater need than before to think soundly, to prove oneself capable of keeping his

[7] Cornelia S. Parker, *An American Idyll, The Life of Carleton H. Parker* (Atlantic Monthly Press, 1919).

own hands at the steering wheel. Greater freedom demands greater responsibility and endless practice in going one's own way without watching. "Character," says Dr. Fosdick, "is what you are in the dark." The training begins early.

PETTING

For most boys and girls it is an advantage for the two sexes to be brought up together. Now that girls have proved that they too have brains, it is better for them to be partners of the boys than to be brought up on the chivalry pattern, defined by Havelock Ellis as an ideal "by which a woman was treated as a cross between an angel and an idiot." With every reasonable chance to have each other's company in play, study, work, both the boys and the girls will get more out of life than otherwise. But here, as in all associations, there are standards to be respected. Petting may or may not be more common than it was in an earlier day; but its frequency is no more a justification than is its pleasantness or its "naturalness."

Petting is playing with fire. We are so constituted than one cannot indulge in intimate physical contact with one of the opposite sex toward whom he has a natural attraction, without arousing deep responses over which he has but partial control. This is especially true in the developing years of adolescence when sex

impulses are strong and the powers of self-control still immature. In petting each is assuming responsibility for creating for the other as well as for himself a serious problem in self-control. The great majority of departures from chastity do not occur with deliberate intent, but result from loss of self-control under the spell of imperious forces aroused by unwise intimacies.

Intelligent choice of a mate must look not only to mutual physical attraction but more so to harmony of tastes, feelings, desires, aspirations, appreciations, and of temperament. It must weigh spiritual more than physical values. The sheer physical gratifications require none of the individuality needed for true mating. Physical gratification can be given and received, as a rule, by anybody and everybody. The life-mate, however, must possess characteristics more individualized than the capacity to gratify physical hunger. But this consideration is likely to be swept aside when the merely physical urges are overstimulated. The best marriages are not begun because of physical attraction alone. But many marriages that end in failure do begin in just this poorer way. Petting is likely to lead to such mismating by overstimulating the merely physical urges and blinding one to the more essential personal qualities and the more subtle harmonies which are required for life-long companionship and enduring happiness. These necessary gifts of discrimination and appreciation are not inborn. . . . And they are not to be cultivated by promiscuous petting.

The drifting tendency of petting seems to head steadily toward a rather careless promiscuity. Physical thrills are the object sought, not the interplay of the whole of two personalities. Love made thus casual, and hence impersonal, is robbed of any lofty or permanent mean-

ing. . . . All love expressed on a physical plane alone is self-limiting. It can never satisfy the higher psychic longings and needs. It is subject to the law of diminishing returns. Is this not likely a reason why petters seek a variety of experiences?

This impersonality which is found in promiscuous petting must mean in the end that one person comes to exploit another for purely selfish conquest regardless of the consequences to that person. This is, of course, particularly true of prostitution, and it is one of the principal reasons why prostitution is so degrading to the individual and so destructive to society. But do we not have very much of the same element of exploitation in petting? Real love seeks to give, and finds its supreme satisfaction in the giving. It seeks the happiness and the good of the object of love, and it suffers at an injury to the person loved. . . . The petter seeks chiefly his own pleasure and uses other persons to that end as he would use a thing, each to be cast aside when it has served its purpose. Such exploitation of others must necessarily be destructive to the personal character of the exploiter. Being essentially selfish it must in a measure lower self-respect. . . .

Of course, there would probably be in most cases a mutual loss of respect for, naturally, each assigns to the other the same selfish motives which actuate him or her. One is bound to lose respect for the partner he exploits.

Many times, when in discussing these matters with college men who have sought to rationalize their petting experiences, I have said something like this: "You realize, do you not, that these girls with whom you engage in petting do as a rule pet also with other men?" "Yes, of course." "Is this the sort of girl you expect to marry?" Usually the impulsive answer is, "Well I should say not!" . . . They are willing to make a play-

thing of the girl who will permit it but when it comes to choosing a love mate, they set for their choice a higher, more discriminating ideal.[8]

Building up these better attitudes needs the help of men and women both. But there is a special chance open to the world's women by reason of their distinctive aptitude for exercising life's more gracious, refining influences. Good as it is in many ways that women now go in for athletics and that the older notion of romantic chivalry has given place to partnership and equality, there is no slight loss when girls and women let the equality idea rob them of a certain fineness. Not only in the crowded street cars and in the other incidents of modern business life is this breaking down of the older reserves so common. Why must being like the men be interpreted to mean: "Be like them in their coarseness?"

It is no sentimentalizing to say that men still need the civilizing influences which women are particularly fitted to offer. The gross animality still found in men requires all the help it can receive from the finer leadings which mark the lady. Perhaps the trouble is that women are now in only the earlier stages of reaction against the wrong in the older standards. It is to be hoped that they

[8] M. J. Exner, *Association Men*, March, 1926.

will once again see how important is the part which womanly manners play in refining the men. Essential distinctions between good and bad breeding will then be taught to boys and men by the ones whose example still remains one of the most potent of civilizing influences.

COEDUCATION

For most people, let it be repeated, coeducation offers many advantages.[9] Boys and girls who pay more attention to each other than to their work had better be educated separately, although it seems certain that even then they will manage to give their chief attention to the object of more vivid interest. In the main, however, our experience in America is that the trouble is confined to a minority, and that with proper influences at work in the home, most boys and girls profit from this association. Segregation is less likely to cure sentimentalism or to prevent transgression than is frank and sensible self-discipline. Sooner or later boys and girls must learn to meet one another without

[9] Many persons have their objections to coeducation confirmed by the jokes in the usual college comics. Here again it is well to remember how false a picture of an entire situation can be painted by the literary artist. If we were to judge college life exclusively from the comic papers, would we ever infer that any student looked at books seriously, or that any boys and girls behaved like gentlemen and ladies?

undue excitation. They need to have many acquaintances before they select the one permanent partner. They are much more likely to choose wisely when they have had the chance to observe one another at work and play, and to learn that a highly attractive face or distinction in dancing may go with insufferable conceit or selfishness. The freer comradeship which gives the silly every chance to make themselves more silly, also gives the level-headed the opportunity to form their judgments and to practice right attitudes.

HOW STANDARDS COME

Adult counsel can be of help too—when it refrains from needless repetition and excessive exhortation. It is at least as necessary as the advice which young people ask of their own accord about their future vocations. Even where it is not offered in lecture form, boys and girls get it from the conversations of their elders, from the praise or blame, the approval or the jokes they hear when engagements and marriages are discussed. A child who hears marriages mentioned with chief reference to the "swell presents" or "a good catch" or "he'll make her comfortable" is receiving a counsel on partner-choosing very unlike the advice got from hearing the new couple congratulated on

meeting the more essential requisites. The discussion of books and plays offers another such opportunity.

In an earlier chapter, the wrong in marrying to save the family fortunes was discussed. Hannah Ferguson, at any rate, was moved by a desire to help her poor parents. But there are homes much less poor than hers where sons and daughters are encouraged to put the money consideration first in their principle of selection. An attractive young woman cares for a young lawyer whose financial prospects for many years are sure to make marriage a burden for her. A wealthy man, quite uncouth and much older than she, wants her. A worldly-wise mother persuades the daughter to choose immediate comfort; and the worldly beauty decides in favor of the luxuries. The rest of the story—this is a true case—may be surmised. An unsatisfied, complaining, neurotic wife eats her heart out. The coming of children does not reconcile her to her husband; but on the contrary, differences between her standards and his make for constant clash over the children's upbringing. She gets her divorce at last—after paying the bitter price of learning from her own experience how wrong her choice as influenced by her mother's false standards had been.

Such outrages against the unions which marriages should be can be prevented, at least in part, by the better principles which intelligent parents make a point of talking over with their children. It is wiser not to harp on failures like the one just cited. Where these are brought to the notice of youth in real life or in books or plays, they give a chance to illustrate the better principle by contrast. But much more can be hoped when the chief stress is put upon the considerations which make for sounder choosing. The point to emphasize is that although marriage is often a risk, its great rewards are more sure to come to those who enter upon it wisely. A future husband should be able to support his family. If the bride, in colloquial phrase, is at least easy to look at, he is to be counted that much more fortunate. But even more important than good looks or ability to provide, there are other things about the personality of the future partner which it is good judgment to weigh well before the union is consummated.

SOME SPECIFICATIONS

Health is one of the requirements young people should be taught to expect. It means more likelihood that needed work will be done well. It promises that he or she will be less apt to mope,

to be enraged at trifles, to grow panicky, or to demand excessive attention. It holds out the hope of exuberance of spirit, capacity for laughter, courage, zest. Not least of course is the assurance that the children and their children in turn will be stronger.

A certain community of tastes, the young people can see quickly enough, is necessary. Indeed, often the initial attraction comes from discovering that this other interesting person also enjoys Keats, reads biology, or sleeps through Economics 4. When husband and wife are both fond of music or athletics, each is that much less likely to become unduly interested in some third person who shares the tastes. Boredom plays as big a part in wrecking some marriages as cruelty or unfaithfulness does in others.

But important as similarity of taste is, nevertheless it is not the only essential. The heroine of *Main Street* was drawn to the young tailor because her husband did not care for poetry. Should he have cultivated this interest? Should she, on the other hand, have cared for hunting as he did? Ideally, it would be a good thing for each partner to try to understand to the utmost the worthier interests of the other. It is certainly necessary for each to know and to respect the other's

fundamental principles. Think only of the havoc wrought when religious differences begin to appear, or when one partner has a high sense of integrity or of the world's need of a better social ethics, and the other cares little. Similarity of taste is a help; but the demand for it must not be pushed too far. It is less important than agreement upon the fundamentals of excellent behavior.

Here no slight assistance comes from a sense of humor. Whatever else the meaning of humor may be, one expression of it is an aptitude for seeing things in proportion. Mark Twain had a way of flying into rage at exhibitions of stupidity and selfishness. There were times when his pet aversion was the entire "damned human race," "God's most elegant joke." In one of these moods, he wrote to his friend, Rev. Dr. Twichell, "The human race ought to be abolished." Then he added, "And I advise you, Joe, to take a day off and attend to it." This saving afterthought made Twain no less ready to go ahead with the reforms he had at heart; for he employed his pen valiantly in many a crusade. But his awareness of men's shortcomings was tempered by a sense of proportion which made him one of the most lovable of persons to live with. Lincoln had much the same gift. Far from blind to human frailty, he could

make allowances. The rigidity which fails in this respect may do as much harm to marriage as downright selfishness. The ability to see a joke relieves many and many a strain.[10] And it can never be exercised with greater profit than in laughing at one's self. Opportunities will hardly be scant, especially when we are tempted to take ourselves too seriously.

These lively paragraphs from the autobiography of a sturdy fighter for social reform convey their own comment:

It must be owned that if courting were generally done on the plan I adopted, there would be little peace and less safety all around. When she came playing among the lumber where we were working, as she naturally would, danger dogged my steps. I carry a scar on the shin-bone made with an adze I should have been minding when I was looking after her. . . . Once I fell off the roof when I must crane my neck to see her go around the corner. But I hardly took note of those things, except to enlist her sympathy by posing as a wounded hero with my arm in a sling at the dancing-school which I had joined on purpose to dance with her. . . .

It was no easy life to which I brought home my young wife. I felt it often with a secret pang when I thought how few friends I had to offer her for those she had left, and how very different was the whole setting of

[10] The Chinese have a proverb: "More people stumble over molehills than over mountains."

her new home. . . . She never with word or look betrayed if she, too, felt the pang. We were comrades for better or worse from the day she put her hand in mine, and never was there a more loyal and faithful one. If, when in the twilight she played softly to herself the old airs from home, the tune was smothered in a sob that was not for my ear, and shortly our kitchen resounded with the most tremendously energetic housekeeping on record, I did not hear. I had drunk that cup to the dregs, and I knew. I just put on a gingham apron and turned in to help her. Two can battle with a fit of homesickness much better than one, even if never a word is said about it. And it can very rarely resist a man with an apron on. I suppose he looks too ridiculous. . . .

. . . Now that I have told all there is to tell, the reader is at liberty to agree with my little boy concerning the upshot of it. He was having a heart-to-heart talk with his mother the other day, in the course of which she told him that we must be patient; no one in the world was all good except God.

"And you," said he, admiringly. He is his father's son.

She demurred, but he stoutly maintained his own.

"I'll bet you," he said, "if you were to ask lots of people around here, they would say you were fine. But"—he struggled reflectively with a button—"Gee! I can't understand why they make such a fuss about papa."

Out of the mouth of babes, etc. The boy is right. I cannot either, and it makes me feel small.[11]

[11] Jacob A. Riis, *The Making of an American* (The Macmillan Company, 1918).

WHEN DISILLUSIONS ENTER

Married life brings its disillusions just as all growth does. But there is a training by which the hurt done in these encounters may be forestalled and minimized. It consists in the main of understanding first of all, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, that marriage is not the only undertaking where failures may be expected. What enterprise, once more, is perfect?

In the second place, young and old can be taught how to turn their disappointments in people to good account. Boys and girls find their brothers and sisters disappointing, sometimes very acutely so. They discover that trusted comrades can be unreliable. They learn that teachers and parents can be miles distant from the heights created by earlier idealization. They read the new history and biography and observe how spotted their heroes were—as streaked with imperfection as the public men of to-day.

All these experiences can be turned to use in the preparation for marriage. The younger a child is, the more sharply defined—pure white and darkest black—are the characters in his world. Nobody can possibly have a kind word to say for Red Riding Hood's wolf. Childhood is notoriously

intolerant. But the point is that our young people can and should be taught how childish this attitude is and how a genuine maturing requires the power to keep clear-sighted in the presence of disillusion. "I see your faults, but I see too the self to which you are not doing justice." There are no perfect beings. The real business of life must be carried on in the company of people, not of angels. Everything depends on the focus of attention. We can habituate ourselves to seeing only the evil in people. We can fool ourselves (until the next shock comes) into seeing only their halos. We can also train ourselves, however, to look at people in the light both of what they are and of what they fail to honor in themselves. A little more practice in the latter of these two ways of judging people would prepare better for the relationship where, because of the intimacy, the disappointments are unusually trying.

The attempt to make these right adjustments is amply rewarded. Instead of running away from the difficulties of living together, people can look upon them as the artist regards his clay, his colors, his words or notes. He does not quarrel with them or lament that they refuse to express what he would have them say. He accepts their challenge, and creates beauty. The true marriage, as Chapter

II has shown, is likewise essentially a venture in creation. The partners do much more than merely remain together in spite of their differences. The union

. . . full of sunshine to our aged eyes
As when it nursed the blossoms of our spring

is one where the creative process works constantly. For the sake of ever finer comradeship, the two people keep on remaking themselves for the better, and thereby encourage each the other to be worthier of the tie. "We grow with all our highest aims," said the German poet. No growth is more admirable than that wherein this constructive expectation calls out more and more excellence in each. Human beings want to create? Splendid opportunity without end lies at hand in the need to take the differences which else might work disharmony and to transform them into the stuff of richer understanding, trust, and comradeship. Training in this direction can be begun young.

Hear this further testimony to the success which a marriage can be:

One evening I was scanning some article on marriage by the fire in Seattle—it was one of those rare times that Carl too was at home and going over lectures for the next day. It held that, to be successful, marriage had

to be an adjustment—a giving in here by the man, there by the woman.

I said to Carl: "If that is true, you must have been doing all the adjusting; I never have had to give up, or fit in, or relinquish one little thing, so you've been doing it all."

He thought for a moment, then answered: "You know, I've heard that too, and wondered about it. For I know I've given up nothing, made no 'adjustments.' On the contrary, I seem always to have been getting more than a human being had any right to count on." [12]

All this is but another way of saying that the prerequisite of successful marriage is character—conceived in the broad sense of sound judgment, high ideals, and effective, fine habit. Health is good; beauty is good; money-making ability is good; artistic tastes are good. But there is a requirement much more fundamental. An Arctic explorer once said that in choosing his men for an expedition, he found that, important as it was for them to be of sturdy build, it was much more consequential for them to possess certain moral characteristics. He had learned that the work needed men who took hold of their share of the common burdens willingly, who could be trusted at all times never to haggle over who was to do what, and who could be counted on to encourage one an-

[12] Cornelia S. Parker, *An American Idyll, The Life of Carleton H. Parker* (Atlantic Monthly Press, 1919).

other when spirits were apt to be depressed. Even when the honeymoon and the voyagings of later years do not take in the North Pole, the same truth holds. We can prepare our youth for successful marriage by teaching them to look for these character requisites in the future mates, by teaching them to rate these essentials above the gifts of face or social charm, and especially by training the young in those life practices of their own by which ethical understanding is always kept real and vital.

GROWTH IN FREEDOM

Teaching, example ("How shall a child learn good manners without seeing any?"), inspiration, practice, these constitute our hopes. External compulsion will not help. Youth refuses to be driven, and rightly refuses. What is wholesome in its plea for liberty deserves all encouragement. But enlightenment there must be too.

The heart of the problem is: "What should freedom mean?" We are not free merely because we reach the age when we can no longer be coerced. The more one is at liberty to go his own way, the greater is the responsibility to prove that he can go sensibly. Every lifting of outward restrictions requires all the more control from within.

Nor are we free when there is nothing to prevent the expression of passion, or caprice. We are free when we subject ourselves to the totality of whatever ideal power is in us. Nobody ever imagines himself to be more free than the drunkard does in his moments of exhilaration. What cares he? How unfettered he feels, at the very moment when he is most chained by his appetite! A person is free when all that goes to make the better man or woman is unhindered by what makes the worse. Far heavier than the chains of marriage are the fetters which many rebellious spirits put upon themselves by their lusts, jealousies, bad temper, laziness, conceit. It takes all of a lifetime to learn what freedom is and how to use it; and at the end, we only just begin to discover that not all our uses of it have been the best. None of us can begin too early to learn how to use it aright.

Under such continued practice, one comes to realize that the best freedom is never reached by people who say: "My problems are my own and concern nobody else." No person is ever thus free. We are linked to the past through our parents. If we have no children of our own to connect us with the future, then other people have; and we owe it to them to keep strong and unhurt

the marriage institution which does make this bond between present, past, and years to come. Whether or not we choose that this should be, the example of one's life, the degree to which he accepts or shirks his obligations, helps other people to do their work in life better, or hinders them.

The institution which has already done so much for the shaping of better personality, has a useful work still to perform. For generations to come, the business of elevating the quality of the race will require all the help which everybody can give to bring the sub-human propensities under the guidance of spiritual ideals. See far off, as an ideal figure, humanity moving forward to constantly higher practices and conceptions of the good life. Then we shall see that personality, as distinguished from self-indulgence or even individualism less gross, is never cultivated in isolation. We are citizens of a spiritual society made up of the fellowship of past and present and those yet to come. When we align ourselves willingly with whatever promotes the noblest excellence of that commonwealth, then and only then may we call ourselves genuinely human and free.

All this, we need to remind ourselves, cannot be explained to our young people in a day, or even a

week. Least of all can these things be understood and taken to heart when a crisis has already arisen. Many parents are in the position of folk who give thought to fire prevention only when the flames are already leaping around them. The building up of sounder ideals cannot be postponed until the troublesome years arrive. It must be begun just as soon as the child can feel the difference between coarseness and vulgarity on the one hand and fineness on the other, between freedom and caprice, between personality and self-will.

Everything depends on the direction aimed at. To seek to remedy to-day's ills by greater freedom to divorce and remarry is to pattern a life plan on the principle of life's failures. The divorce is like a surgical operation, necessary in more than one situation otherwise desperate. Shall we therefore live as heedlessly as we will, because when the damage at last appears, we can always call upon the surgeon's knife? More reasonable it would be to seek out ways of living which will render the operation unnecessary and insure for the marriage a steady growth in noble health. Instead of leveling down by sanctioning the looser unions, level up in the direction of higher standards of personality and freedom. Behind the assaults on marriage are fallacies which need to be replaced

by sounder philosophies of life. "These truths," we must say to our young people, "we, of course, cannot compel you to learn. You must learn them for yourselves with whatever assistance you are willing to take from us. But it is our trust that because you are more richly dowered with outward freedoms than we were at your age, you will learn these truths better than we, that you will not waste your precious youth in repeating our mistakes, but that the advance you wish to promote will be really forward and up."

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